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THE
POLITICAL PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY



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THE
POLITICAL PROGRESS OF
CHRISTIANITY

BY THE
HON. ALBERT S. G. CANNING

AUTHOR OF
'INTOLERANCE AMONG CHRISTIANS' 'AN ESSAY ON CHRISTIAN TOLERATION'

'A Virgin is his mother, but his sire
The power of the Most High. He shall ascend
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens'

MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*, Book xii

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WORKS REFERRED TO.

- Alison (Sir Archibald), History of Europe.
 Arnold (Mr. John Mulheisen), Koran and Bible.
 Baker (Col. Valentine), Clouds in the East.
 Disraeli (Right Hon. B.), Speech in the House of Commons, May 5.
 1876.
 Draper (Dr.), Intellectual Development of Europe.
 Froude (Mr.), Short Studies on Great Subjects.
 Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
 Gladstone (Right Hon. W. E.), Contribution to 'Contemporary
 Review,' June, 1876.
 Guizot, History of Civilization in Europe.
 Hallam, History of the Middle Ages.
 Hellwald (Von), England and Russia in Central Asia.
 Lewis (Sir G. Cornewall), Influence of Authority in Matters of
 Opinion.
 Macaulay (Lord), Essays.
 M'Gahan (Major), Campaigning on the Oxus.
 Maurice (Professor), Religions of the World.
 Milman (Dean), History of Christianity.
 Newman (Dr.), Development of Christianity and Grammar of
 Assent.
 Paley's Works.
 Prescott, Conquest of Peru.
 Rawlinson (Sir Henry), England and Russia in the East.
 Renan (Ernest), Lives of the Apostles.
 Russell (Earl), Western Christianity.
 Schlegel, Philosophy of History.
 Scott (Sir Walter), Essay on Chivalry.
 Simpson, Church History.
 Smith (Bosworth), Lectures on Mahometanism.
 Stanley (Dean), Eastern Church.
 Stratford (Lord), Letter to the 'Times,' May, 1876.
 Vernet (Abbé), History of the Knights of Malta.
 Wallace (Mackenzie), Russia.
 Whately (Archbishop), Annotations to Paley's Works.

THE POLITICAL PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN the history of the ancient world, the three most remarkable nations—at least the best known to modern Europeans—are the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans. Dr. Newman,¹ comparing these three great nations of antiquity, observes,—

The Jews are one of the few Oriental nations who are known in history as a people of progress, and their line is progress in religion. In that, their own line, they stand by themselves among all the populations—not only of the East, but of the West. Their country may be called the classical home of

¹ 'Grammar of Assent,' p. 426.

the religious principle, as Greece is the home of intellectual power, and Rome that of political and practical wisdom.

Of these, the poetry and philosophy of the last-named nations are to this day the constant study of educated men, and certainly not all the advantages or accomplishments of modern times have diminished the interest of classic thoughts and writings, but, on the contrary, have enabled modern Europeans to appreciate them more than at any former period. It is remarkable, however, that while the great minds of Greece and Rome for centuries professed to believe in a strange, fanciful religion, many of their philosophers vaguely acknowledged an Unknown God—thus virtually renouncing their national paganism. Yet they do not seem to have ever studied the Jewish religion, to which their own ignorant and untaught Deism was apparently tending; for Lord Macaulay writes of the Romans:¹

The sacred books of the Hebrews, books which,

¹ 'Essay on History.'

considered merely as human compositions, are invaluable to the critic, the antiquarian, and the philosopher, seem to have been utterly unnoticed by them. The peculiarities of Judaism, and the rapid growth of Christianity, attracted their notice. They made war against the Jews. They made laws against the Christians; but they never opened the Books of Moses. When we consider that two sects on which the attention of the [Roman] Government was constantly fixed, appealed to these Scriptures as the rule of their faith and practice, this indifference is astonishing. The fact seems to be that the Greeks admired only themselves, and that the Romans admired only themselves and the Greeks.

The ancient Jews, moreover, unlike their Christian descendants or the Mahometans, and somewhat resembling the Chinese in haughty contempt for all foreigners, had no idea of proselytising, no desire to extend their religion, which they seemed to regard as an exclusive and national possession. Thus, while many Greek and Roman philosophers were practically Deists, they remained entirely ignorant of Jewish Scriptural history; and their country-

men continued for centuries in ignorant paganism, which yet their refined, intelligent minds rendered alluring and fanciful rather than depraved or debasing; but the Jews, despite their superior knowledge derived from Divine revelation, remained, as Dean Milman says,¹ 'a race of religious fanatics, a rigid and unsocial people,' politically apart from the rest of mankind, whom the martial ambition of both Greeks and Romans alike aspired to subdue.

The political conquests, however, of these two great nations produced very different results. The brilliant triumphs of the Greeks were comparatively barren and shortlived, while the subsequent conquests of the Romans resulted in a civilised, permanent empire, and both Greeks and Jews alike fell under its yoke. Yet though Roman conquest in Europe extended over countries unknown to the Greeks, their Asiatic conquests were more limited than those previously achieved by Alexander the

¹ 'History of Christianity.'

Great. For the Parthian mountaineers, whose descendants, the Affghans (the Swiss of Asia, as they have been called), have always repelled invasion, were never entirely subdued by the Romans. But enormous as their empire was, the ancients, according to Gibbon,¹ were usually inclined to over-estimate its extent—‘They gradually usurped the license of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth.’ And certainly if even the limited map of the ancient world, excluding America and Australasia, be examined, we shall find that the Roman Empire never included some of the most populous countries in the world. The empires of India, China, Tartary, Arabia, and a large part of Persia and Affghanistan, containing millions of inhabitants, were never subject to the Romans. All North Europe, together with the greater part of Africa, were also never invaded by them.

In China, the most populous country in the world, which was unknown to the Greeks and

¹ ‘Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,’ vol. i.

Romans, a great, and in many respects virtuous, lawgiver, Confucius, had preached and taught with success nearly 500 years before the birth of Jesus in Judea. Mr. Legge¹ describes the exclusive spirit of his moral and religious system, which certainly influences the Chinese character and policy to the present day,—

He threw no new light on any of the questions which have a world-wide interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had no sympathy with progress. His influence has been wonderful, but it will henceforth wane.

Mr. Legge adds that ‘Confucius’s simple views of society and government were in a manner sufficient for the [Chinese] people, while they dwelt away from the rest of mankind. I do not,’ he says, ‘charge the contemptuous arrogance of the Chinese Government on Confucius; what I deplore is that he left no principles on record to check the development of such a spirit.’ Frederick Schlegel observes,²—

¹ ‘Life of Confucius,’ p. 115.

² ‘Philosophy of History,’ p. 119.

Even in ancient as well as in modern times, China never figured in the history of Western Europe or Asia, and had no connexion whatever with their inhabitants; but this great country has ever stood apart like a world within itself in the remote unknown Eastern Asia.

The ancient religions of India and Burmah, which have likewise remained almost unchanged during the lapse of ages, are also examined at some length by this writer, who draws some comparison between the Hindoo and ancient Greek mythologies. He then describes the three chief Hindoo deities—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva—Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer—but says little or nothing about the human sacrifices to the idol Juggernaut, the widow-burning rites of the Suttee, or the murderous superstition of the Thugs, which in these modern times the English Government has succeeded in suppressing.

Respecting the religion of Egypt, Schlegel, after stating the resemblance between its ancient idolatry and that of India, remarks,—

The Egyptian mind, so far as it has been delineated by the Greeks, appears to have been more deeply conversant and initiated in natural science, and on the other hand, the Egyptian idolatry was of a more decided cast, and was even more material in its fundamental errors than the Indian. The worship of animals especially was far more general.

He further states, in his review of the ancient Asiatic nations, that the Persians ‘in their views of God and religion resembled the Jews more than any other nation.’ The ancient Persians who worshipped the sun were disciples of Zoroaster, of whom little is personally known, though Gibbon¹ and Guizot make quotations from his extraordinary book, the ‘Zend Avesta,’ which describes two spirits, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the Good and Evil Deities, as contending for the human soul. Gibbon writes,—

The moral duties, however, of justice, mercy, and liberality, were in their turn required of the

¹ ‘Decline and Fall,’ vol. i.

disciples of Zoroaster, who wish to escape the persecutions of Ahriman, and to live with Ormuzd in a blissful eternity.

But though the ancient Persians, unlike the Egyptians and Hindoos, extended their conquests 'far into the provinces of Central Asia, coming in contact with China, and finally subduing Egypt,' according to Schlegel, they do not seem to have spread the national faith of Zoroaster far beyond their own country. As Dr. Newman remarks,¹—

Hitherto [before Christianity] it had been the received notion in the world, that each nation had its own gods. The Romans legislated upon that basis, and the Jews had held it from the first, holding, of course also, that all gods but their own gods were idols and demons.

The ancient religions of Judea, Egypt, India, Persia, and China, like that of Rome and Greece, were comparatively confined to their respective countries; nor did pagan political

¹ 'Grammar of Assent,' p. 449.

conquest attempt the conversion of the soul. Dean Milman says,

The Romans conquered like savages, but ruled like philosophic statesmen. Within the pale, national distinctions were dying away—all tribes and races met amicably in the general relation of Roman subjects or citizens, and mankind seemed settling down into one great federal society. About this point of time Christianity appeared. As Rome had united the whole Western world into one, as it might almost seem, lasting social system, so Christianity was the first religion which aimed at an universal and permanent moral conquest. The religions of the older world were content with their dominions over the particular people which were their several votaries. Family, tribal, national deities were universally recognised, and as their gods accompanied the migrations or conquests of different nations, the worship of those gods were extended over a wider surface, but rarely propagated among the subject races.

It was reserved for the two comparatively modern religions of the world—Christianity and Mahometanism—issuing from the adjoining

¹ • History of Christianity.

countries of Syria and Arabia, to spread their respective doctrines by the aid not only of eloquence and persuasion, but of sword and scimitar. Yet nothing could be more peaceful than the short earthly career of Jesus himself, publicly executed at an early age, without resistance, or any attempt at rescue on the part of his few Jewish and Greek believers. As Dr. Newman observes,¹ ‘He left the world without apparently doing much for the object of his coming, but after He was gone, his disciples were found wonderfully to have succeeded.’ Christianity, however, spread chiefly to the north-west of Judea, and the preaching of St. Peter and St. Paul, addressed to Greeks and Romans, made far more impression upon those intellectual and comparatively unprejudiced nations than the words of Jesus himself addressed previously to the rigid, bigoted Jews. It is evident that the marvellous account of the Resurrection contributed powerfully, if not mainly, to the spread of Christi-

¹ ‘Grammar of Assent.’

anity. Upon this subject, Archbishop Whately observes,¹—

The first Christians were very unlike enthusiasts, and still less were the men with whom they had to deal such as could be won by mere enthusiasm. And if we would only allow the Christians to speak for themselves, the Gospel and Acts of Luke will alone show us that they had very sound notions of the sort of proof which can establish facts and of the necessity of such proof. Twelve men were the prime *witnesses* of the Resurrection, their *qualifications* that they had known Jesus during his whole public life, and had eaten and drunk, and had familiarly conversed with Him for forty days after his rising again. Christianity, from the first at least, pretended and believed itself to stand upon the evidence of testimony, not on pre-conceived fancies. With these pretensions, then, it arose in an enlightened and sceptical age, but amongst a despised and narrow-minded people. It earned hatred and persecution at home by its liberal genius and opposition to the national prejudices. It earned contempt abroad by its connexion with the country where it was born, but which sought to strangle it in its birth. Emerging from Judea, it made its way outward through the

¹ 'Annotations to Paley's Evidences,' p. 391.

most polished regions of the world—Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and in all it attracted notice and provoked hostility. . . .

When the pagan Athenians, at first surprised and incredulous, heard a man like St. Paul, who was, as Paley observes ('*Horæ Paulinæ*'),

A man of liberal attainments, and, in other points, of sound judgment, who had addicted his life to the service of the Gospel—who, when driven from one city, preached in the next, persisting in this course to old age, unaltered by the experience of ingratitude, prejudice, desertion, unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, persecutions, unmoved by long confinement, and undismayed by the prospect of death,

they, probably, asked themselves the question with which Paley concludes his work,—

Was there ever an example yet of a man, neither mad nor idiotic, voluntarily undertaking a life of want and pain, of incessant fatigue, of continued peril, submitting to the loss of his home and country, to stripes and stoning, to tedious imprisonment, and the constant expectation of a violent death, for the

sake of carrying about a story of what was false, and of what, if false, he must have known to be so?

But Christianity was much more successful in converting Europeans than Asiatics, although the Gospel history was surrounded with so many Oriental associations. The ancient Greek mythology was gradually losing its hold on the minds of many of the wisest and most learned Greeks and Romans, who remembered and studied the words of their greatest men, throwing doubts upon the strange religion of Jupiter, and hinting at the existence of One Supreme Deity. Such minds were, therefore, more prepared and willing to receive the doctrine of Jesus than the Jews, who remained proudly attached to their old religion, and denied that their obscure, peaceful countryman, Jesus of Nazareth, could be their long-promised and heroic Messiah. Consequently, the successful spread of Christianity was chiefly throughout Europe. The accomplished French writer, M. Renan, says,¹—

¹ 'Lives of the Apostles,' p. 222.

The early [Christian] missions were all directed Westward, or in other words, adopted the Roman Empire for their scene of operations. . . . For a thousand years the Mediterranean has been the great pathway of ideas and civilisation. The Romans, in extirpating its pirates, had rendered it an unequal method of intercourse. . . . The comparative safety of the imperial highways, the protection afforded by the civil authority, the diffusion of the Jews around the Mediterranean coasts, the spreading of the Greek language over their Eastern portion, and the unity of civilisation, which first the Greeks and then the Romans had extended over those countries, all joined to make the map of the [Roman] empire, a map of the regions set apart for Christian missions, and destined to be Christianised. The Roman world became the Christian world, and in this sense the founders of the empire may be called the founders of the Christian monarchy, or at least they may be said to have drawn its outlines. Every province conquered by the empire has been a conquest for Christianity. . . . A flash of light from Syria illumining almost at once the three great peninsulas of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, and soon followed by a second which extended over the whole Mediterranean sea-board—such was the first apparition of Christianity. The Christian preaching seems to have followed a road

already laid out, and which is no other than that of the Jewish emigration. Like a contagion which, having its point of departure at the far end of the Mediterranean, appeared at once at a number of separate points on the shore by a secret communication, Christianity had its places of settlement marked in advance. These sea ports were nearly all places where there existed colonies of Jews. The Synagogue generally preceded the [Christian] Church. It was like a train of powder, or, more correctly, an electrical cord along which the new idea ran with almost instantaneous rapidity.

The Christian doctrine, however, was for some time viewed with contempt and hostility by many Roman writers, more apparently from dislike to the Jews or anything connected with Judea, than from sincere attachment to, or even belief in, their own fanciful paganism. Schlegel says,¹—

In the last years of Augustus, the first deified Emperor, occurs the birth of Jesus; in the time of Tiberius, the foundation of the Christian religion; and in the reign of Nero, the first perfectly authentic record of that great event in the Roman history.

¹ 'Philosophy of History,' p. 269.

Tacitus, whom Macaulay pronounces the greatest of all Roman historians, is among the first as well as the ablest of the heathen writers who mention Christianity. He apparently alludes to the Resurrection of Jesus, which, attested and declared by living witnesses, doubtless had an immense effect in spreading belief in Christianity. Tacitus, after recording the execution of Christ, says¹: 'This pernicious superstition, thus repressed for a time, broke out afresh not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome, &c.' This temporary 'repression' probably means the discouragement caused by the execution of Jesus, and the 'breaking out afresh' of his alleged Resurrection, which, to the minds of sincere believers, would produce a greater effect than any amount of worldly triumph. To those who honestly doubt the Resurrection of Jesus, the worldly progress of Christianity must seem, not only the most wonderful event in history, but one com-

¹ 'Annals,' book xv.

pletely opposed to all precedent, and to all experience of human nature. For the mere earthly career of Jesus was, apparently, a continual failure. Opposed by the chief priests and learned men of his own nation, and unknown to all others, He gathered around Him some poor fishermen and peasants, preached for a few years, only in Syria, made few converts of any particular repute, and then uttered deep reproaches against the priesthood of his own nation, who at length persuaded their Roman governor to execute Him, and thus prevent his further 'corrupting the people,' as they called it, by endangering their spiritual influence over them. The whole conduct of the Romans at the execution of Jesus, their indifference to the charges of the accusers, and to the preaching of the accused, is one of the many proofs of their disregard for the religious opinions and feelings of all their various political subjects. As Schlegel observes,¹—

It was only when Christianity had become a

¹ 'Philosophy of History.

power in the world—the principle of a new life, and of a new form of life totally differing from all preceding forms of existence—that it began to attract the attention of the Romans as a remarkable historical occurrence.

In their vast empire, the Romans cared as little for the Deism of the Jews as for the worship of Odin and Irminsul among the ancient British and Germans, the Sun worship of the Persians, or the worship of Isis and Serapis among the Egyptians. The spirit of proselytising, so conspicuous in mediæval and modern history—even the love of religious argument and discussion—was little known among them. All the various nations under their sway might worship their respective deities without fear of persecution, provided the requisite *political* submission was made and adhered to. But no pagan priest wandered even through the subdued empire, preaching about the power of Jupiter, the happiness of Elysium, or the torments of Hades, in the impassioned language of Christian missionaries announcing the felicity of

heaven and misery of hell, recounting the harrowing story of the Crucifixion, and death of Jesus ; nor did the Roman generals ever attempt to spread their religion at the sword's point like some Christian,¹ and nearly all Mahometan warriors. For though the Romans nominally believed in the old Greek religion, many of them had always viewed it with distrust, and this distrust had greatly increased at the time of the birth of Jesus. Among them, a people eminently intellectual, comparatively free from bigoted prejudice, shrewd politicians and invincible warriors, the Christian doctrine preached only by a few Jews, who were fiercely condemned even by their own fellow-countrymen, had for some time apparently little chance of success. But the wonderful courage and eloquence of Christian apostles and missionaries prevailed over every worldly obstacle. Belief in the actual Resurrection of Jesus, which, of course, explained and justified all his myste-

¹ Prescott ('Conquest of Peru'), alluding to the conversion of the natives to Christianity by the Spanish invaders, says, 'The sword was a good argument when the tongue failed.'

rious words, and more than made amends for apparent failure on earth, inspired the first Christian preachers with an energy which no mere enthusiasm could rival. As Dean Milman observes,¹ after declaring that the Resurrection was the basis of Christianity, the groundwork of Christian doctrine and of the soul's immortality,—

It placed the Being whom but fifty days before they had seen helplessly expiring upon the cross, far above the pride, almost the idol of the [Jewish] nation, King David. The ashes of the king had long reposed in the tomb which was before their eyes, but the tomb could not confine Jesus—death had no power over his remains. . . . Three thousand declared converts were the result of this first appeal to the Jewish multitude. The [Christian] religion thus re-appeared in a form new, complete, and more decidedly hostile to the prevailing creed and dominant sentiments of the nation; from this time the Christian community assumed its separate and organised existence, united by the federal rite of baptism.

But the Jews eagerly denied the asserted

¹ 'History of Christianity,' p. 356.

Resurrection, maintaining that the body of Jesus had been stolen from the sepulchre and secretly buried by some of his disciples, who then spread a false report of the Resurrection of their dead prophet. To many this statement of the Jews may have seemed sufficiently probable, but the Romans appear for some years to have paid little attention to either assertion. Probably, however, their contemptuous dislike to the Jews indirectly favoured the Christians; for to them alone, the Jews, even after their political ruin and dispersion, showed a hatred and malevolence quite unlike their stolid indifference to all other religious communities. Viewing the Christians as base apostates from their own religion, and Jesus himself as an audacious reviler of their priesthood and national character, they evidently did their utmost for many years to set their Roman masters against their unfortunate fellow-countrymen throughout the empire, in the same way as their ancestors had done against Jesus himself. On the other hand, the Jews com-

plained that they were represented by a small section of their fellow-countrymen as unpardonable enemies of the human race, for executing a man, which they believed they had a legal right to do, who had tried to subvert their religion, by proclaiming himself the Son of God. Nothing in his short earthly career, they declared, had authorised the conduct or words of Jesus, and then the false story of his Resurrection was invented to retrospectively justify his superhuman pretensions. The Jews, therefore, beheld with disgust and indignation their Christian fellow-countrymen, deifying an executed impostor (as they thought), condemning with bitter reproaches the clergy of their persecuted nation, and declaring that of all races on the earth, the Jews—the chosen people of God, exalted, favoured, and preferred before any other human race—had committed in the sight of Heaven the greatest crime ever perpetrated by man. For this was the bold assertion which their own fellow-countrymen were spreading through the world, thus

increasing the haughty dislike already felt towards the Jews—a subdued race—by the nations of the earth, and especially by the Romans, whose rule they had long endured, and by whom their national ruin and dispersion were finally effected. Dr. Newman eloquently writes,¹—

It is an historical fact that at the very time the Jews committed their unpardonable sin, whatever it was, and were driven out of their home to wander over the earth, their Christian brethren born of the same stock, and equally citizens of Jerusalem, did also issue forth from the same home, but in order to subdue that same earth and to make it their own—that is, they undertook the very work, which, according to the promise, this nation actually was ordained to execute, and with a method of their own, and with a new end, and only slowly and painfully, but still really and thoroughly, they did it. And since that time the two children of the promise have ever been found together—of the promise forfeited, and the promise fulfilled—and whereas the Christian has been in high place, so the Jew has been degraded and despised—the one has been ‘the head’ and the other

¹ ‘Grammar of Assent,’ p. 432.

'the tail,' so that, to go no further, the fact that Christianity has actually done what Judaism was to have done, decides the controversy by the logic of facts in favour of Christianity.

It was natural, therefore, that no other nation hated Christians and Christianity like the unconverted Jews. Dean Milman says,¹—

As Christianity advanced into all other quarters of the world, its proselytes were in far larger proportion of Gentile than of Jewish descent. The Synagogue and the Church became more and more distant till they stood opposed in irreconcilable hostility. The Jews shrank back into their stern seclusion, while the Christians were literally spreading in every quarter through the population of the [Roman] Empire. . . . Mutual hatred was increased by mutual alienation; the Jew, who had lost the power of persecuting, lent himself as a willing instrument to the heathen persecutor against those whom he still considered as apostates from his religion. The less enlightened Christian added to the contempt of all the Roman world for the Jew a principle of deeper hostility.

A more unfortunate position than that of

¹ 'History of Christianity,' vol. i. p. 420.

the Jews during the progress and triumph of Christianity through the Roman Empire could hardly be imagined. Without home or country, politically helpless and socially despised, they gradually found themselves exposed to general execration for their treatment of Jesus, and found that daily, more among the Romans, Greeks, and other Europeans were converted to a new doctrine, which was to them a national condemnation. Yet, even at this period of humiliation and danger, they rigidly preserved that stern, exclusive, and self-reliant spirit, which, from the earliest ages, had always distinguished them. As Dean Milman remarks,¹—

The obstinate Jew sternly wrapped himself up in his sullen isolation; his aversion from the rest of mankind, under the sense of galling oppression and disappointed pride, settled into hard hostility. He surrendered himself a willing captive to the new priestly dominion, that of the Rabbis, which enslaved his whole life to a system of minute ordinances; he rejoiced in the riveting and multiplying those bonds

¹ 'History of Christianity,' vol. i.

which had been burst by Christianity, but which he wore as the badge of hopes still to be fulfilled, of glories which were at length to compensate for his present humiliation.

Instead of attempting to combat the new Christian doctrine by argument, which for many years they might have done with safety, the Jews rather avoided discussion upon religious matters, and devoted themselves almost entirely to trade, in whatever countries they happened to be. As Gibbon sarcastically observes¹ of the Jews under Roman dominion,—

Awakened from their dream of prophecy and conquest, they assumed the behaviour of peaceable and industrious subjects. Their irreconcilable hatred of mankind, instead of flaming out in acts of blood and violence, evaporated in less dangerous gratifications. They embraced every opportunity of overreaching the idolaters in trade.

All they attempted was to defend their own scattered nation from the efforts of Christian proselytisers, in which they were remarkably

¹ 'Decline and Fall,' vol. ii.

successful, considering their political degradation, and the increasing influence of the Christians. Yet in the heathen world for many years the Christians had to contend with enemies who, if less bitter than the Jews, were inclined to oppose the new doctrines by persecution as well as argument. Dean Milman writes,¹ comparing the early struggles of Christianity with Jews and pagans—

The conflict of Christianity with Judaism was a civil war, that with Paganism the invasion and conquest of a foreign territory. . . . At Athens, the centre at once and capital of the Greek philosophy and heathen superstition, takes place the first public and direct conflict between Christianity and Paganism. . . . In Athens, the appearance of a new public teacher, instead of offending the popular feelings, was too familiar to excite astonishment, and was rather welcomed as promising some fresh intellectual excitement, and in Athens, hospitable to all religions and all opinions, the foreign and Asiatic appearance, and possibly the less polished tone and dialect of Paul, would only waken the stronger curiosity. . . . We may contemplate Paul as the repre-

¹ 'History of Christianity,' vol. i.

sentative of Christianity in the presence, as it were, of the concentrated religions of Greece and of the spirits, if we may so speak, of Socrates, Plato, and Zeno.

Milman says of St. Paul's celebrated sermon to the Athenian pagans,—

It is calm, temperate, conciliatory ; it is no fierce denunciation of idolatry, no contemptuous disdain of the prevalent philosophic opinions ; it has nothing of the sternness of the ancient Jewish prophet, nor the taunting defiance of the later Christian polemic. . . . The great Christian doctrine of the Resurrection closed the speech of Paul.

Professor Maurice says,¹ of St. Paul's sermon to the Athenians, which Dean Milman calls the most permanently-effective oration ever uttered by man,—

When we are made acquainted with his words, we find they are of this kind, 'Whom ye ignorantly worship—Him declare I unto you.' . . . the teaching was adapted to all that was sound and true in the Greek mind. . . . Therefore, the Greek mythology was met at all points by this gospel. . . .

¹ 'Religions of the World,' p. 215.

So it fared likewise with the Romans. A faith without an harmonious organised society was to the Latin a dream. . . . A king in whom was seen the perfect fulfilment of law—the surrender of the individual will to the Higher will—the entire self-sacrifice ; a king who was the centre of a society,—the head of many members,—was proclaimed by the fishermen of Galilee, by the tent-maker of Tarsus. That announcement met Roman life on all its sides and aspects, adopted its highest missions, over-reached its noblest ideas of fellowship ; showed that the true society had for its chief—one altogether unlike the Emperor—one whom he must crush, or to whom he must bow ; and so by slow degrees the Roman state-idolatry, like the Greek idolatry of individual forms and persons, perished out of the world.

Yet though the eloquence, energy, and invincible perseverance of the Apostles were certain to secure many disciples, the first reception of Christianity by the best educated Romans was cold and discouraging. Upon this subject, Dr. Newman¹ says that ‘ Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny were the only heathen writers who distinctly mention Christianity for the first 150

¹ ‘ Development of Christianity.’

years.' All three were decidedly hostile to it, and had only vague ideas of its principles. Dr. Newman writes, respecting the strange position of Christians and Jews under the Roman rule,—

The Christian, being at first accounted a kind of Jew, was on this score included in whatever odium and whatever bad association attended on the Jewish name. But in a little time his independence of the rejected people was clearly understood, as even the persecutions shew, and he stood upon his own ground.

And he makes the following remarkable statement about the various religions under Roman dominion, and the position of Christianity when it first appeared,—

Upon the established religions of Europe, the East had renewed her encroachments and was pouring forth a family of rites which, in various ways, attracted the attention of the luxurious, the political, the ignorant, the restless, and the remorseful. Armenian, Chaldee, Egyptian, Jew, Syrian, Phrygian, as the case might be, was the designation of the

new hierophant, and magic, superstition, barbarism, jugglery, were the names given to his rite by the world. In this company appeared Christianity. When three well-informed writers [Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny] call Christianity a superstition, they were not using words at random, or the language of abuse, but they were describing it in distinct and recognised terms as cognate to those gloomy, secret, odious, and disreputable religions, which were making so much disturbance up and down the Roman Empire.

Until Christianity, however, began to threaten *political* disturbance, it does not seem to have been much persecuted by the Roman Government. Simpson, in his 'Church History,' writes that, though Jesus himself was executed in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar,

No public laws were enacted against Christianity till the reign of Nero. The Christians condemned the religion of the State which was closely connected with the Roman Government, and the Romans, though they tolerated religions from which the commonwealth had nothing to fear, would not suffer the ancient religion of their nation to be derided, and the people to be withdrawn from it.

Yet these things the Christians dared to do. They also assailed the religions of other nations. Thence they were concluded to be unfriendly to the public peace.

Mr. Simpson remarks,—

The pagan persecutions were probably not, upon the whole, unfavourable to the progress of Christianity. For their extreme barbarity was not only revolting to the spectators, but gave fortitude to the sufferers whose constancy in torture was the admiration of the best part of the heathen, and convinced them of the sincerity of the Christians; and in addition to this, Christians were dispersed into distant lands by the cruelties practised against them, and carried with them the doctrines of the Gospel to places which would otherwise have long remained without them.

About the year 72, the Jews, after their hapless revolt against the Romans,¹ were banished wholesale from their country, and dispersed among the nations of the earth, and chiefly in the dominions of the Romans—their victorious enemies. But while they, with their Christian fellow-countrymen, were alike strangers to Rome, and politically at the mercy

¹ Schlegel says thirty-three years after the death of Jesus.

of the Roman Government—their conduct and hopes were very different. The Jews applied themselves to trade and commerce—never attempted to make converts—or interfere in any political movement. All they desired was to preserve their ancient faith undisturbed, and await with calm patience their expected Restoration to Judea under the leadership of a future Messiah, whom to this day they believe has never appeared. But as the Christians increased throughout the Roman Empire, their hatred to the Jews increased likewise. The cruel execution of Jesus, and the vindictive curse which the Jewish bigots had laid on their posterity by desiring ‘Christ’s blood to remain on themselves and on their children,’ was often repeated and remembered, while the mere sight of the crucifix was enough to enrage the ignorant and excitable Christians against people who were personally as innocent as themselves of any share in the death of Jesus. Although at first the Jews fiercely opposed the spread of Christianity, and exerted

all their influence to set the Roman Government against it, they gradually abandoned this course; for as Christianity became more general, making converts more among pagans than from their own scattered remnant of a nation, the Jews began to regard it with comparative indifference, though they earnestly and vigorously tried to check conversions to it among themselves. Gibbon says¹ of the enmity between the Jews and early Christians under Roman rule,—

The barren synagogue abhorred and envied the fecundity of the rebellious Church; the power of the Jews was not equal to their malice, but their gravest Rabbis had approved the private murder of an apostate, and their seditious clamours had often awakened the indolence of the pagan magistrate. Under the reign of Constantine, the Jews became the subjects of their revolted children, nor was it long before they experienced the bitterness of domestic tyranny. The civil immunities which had been granted or confirmed by Severus were gradually repealed by the Christian princes.

¹ 'Decline and Fall,' vol. ii.

By degrees, however, Christianity separated itself from the Jewish race, making extensive conversions all through the Roman Empire, but especially in Europe. Meanwhile, the pagan government of Rome became irritated against its Christian subjects, more perhaps from political apprehensions than any religious prejudice. For as Earl Russell observes,¹—

The religion of Rome had always been more political than religious, and in the time of the empire it became altogether an engine of the state. The offence of the Christians in the eyes of the Roman Government was not heresy or blasphemy, but sedition.

Gibbon writes,²—

The religious policy of the ancient world seems to have assumed a more stern and intolerant character to oppose the progress of Christianity. About four-score years after the death of Christ, his innocent disciples were punished with death by the sentence of a pro-consul [Pliny] of the most amiable and

¹ 'History of Western Christianity,' p. 49.

² 'Decline and Fall,' ch. 16.

philosophic character, and according to the laws of an Emperor [Trajan] distinguished by the wisdom and justice of his general administration.

Yet Gibbon denies that there was any persecution of Christians by the Romans from the death of Christ till the destruction of Jerusalem. The cruelties of Nero (thirty-five years after the death of Christ) against the Christians, Gibbon says, were entirely confined to those who happened to be within the walls of Rome, and their religious tenets were never made a subject of punishment, or even enquiry; but this assertion is denied by Guizot in a note to Gibbon's History, who maintains that edicts against Christianity were issued by Nero throughout the empire. From Pliny's celebrated letter to Trajan, many years after Nero's death, it is evident that mere belief in Christianity without any blamable act was considered punishable even by the most humane and enlightened Romans. But the implacable enmity of the Jews towards Christianity was utterly unable to arrest its progress through

the Roman Empire, though its increasing influence began to alarm the Romans themselves, chiefly for political reasons. Upon this subject Milman writes,¹—

As Christianity became more powerful, a vague apprehension began to spread abroad among the Roman people that the fall of their old religion might to a certain degree involve that of their civil dominion, and this apprehension it cannot be denied was justified by the tone of some of the Christian writings, and no doubt by the language of some Christian teachers. Idolatry was not merely an individual, but a national sin, which would be visited by temporal as well as spiritual retribution.

Yet, notwithstanding these political reasons for pagan hatred to Christianity, according to Gibbon and Milman the Christians from the reigns of the Roman Emperors, Nero and Domitian, to that of Diocletian, were comparatively free from persecution. During that period Christian doctrine made enormous progress, entirely by peaceful means, and not by a single earthly victory ; but the time at length

¹ 'History of Christianity,'

came for its conflict with political power. Milman says,—

The final contest between Paganism and Christianity drew near. Almost 300 years had elapsed since the Divine author of the new religion had entered upon his mortal life, and now having gained so powerful an ascendancy over the civilised world, the Gospel was to undergo its last and most trying ordeal before it should assume the reins of empire, and become the established religion of the Roman world. It was to sustain the deliberate and systematic attack of the temporal authority, arming in almost every part of the empire in defence of the ancient Polytheism. The Christians no longer declined or refused to aspire to the honours of the state. They filled offices of distinction and even of supreme authority in the provinces and in the army, they were exempted either by tacit connivance or direct indulgence from the accustomed sacrifices.

The historians Gibbon and Milman, though differing so much in their views of Christianity, are nearly agreed about the leading facts of its political history. Schlegel writes,¹—

¹ 'Philosophy of History,' p. 296.

The first persecution under Nero was only a momentary freak of blood-thirsty tyranny—a passing trait of that monster's cruelty. The first regular edict against the Christians in the Roman Empire was passed by Domitian in the 87th year of our [Christian] era. The better Nerva softened the rigour of this law. . . . Trajan also decided in the 120th year of our era that the Christians, who were then uncommonly numerous, should not be sought after, but that when denounced, they should be punished according to the law existing against such religious associations and communities. But notwithstanding all these apparent mitigations of severity introduced by the better Emperors, the criminal jurisprudence of the Romans, like their foreign warfare, ever remained most atrocious. . . . With many vicissitudes, Christianity remained in this state until the reign of Diocletian, who, pursuing a far more systematic plan than most of his predecessors, attempted entirely to root it out; but this was no longer possible, and the growing Church received its first formal edict of pacification at the hands of the Emperor Constantine. The pagan enthusiast, Julian, attempted a second time to subvert it, but it was now too late.

According to all three authorities—Gibbon,

Schlegel, and Milman—the cruel persecutions of Diocletian and Galerius utterly failed either to crush the rising power of Christianity, or in any way to revive the failing strength of paganism; and these two contending religions in a few years after involved the Roman Empire in a terrible civil war—the Christians, under Constantine; the pagans, under Maxentius. The character of Constantine, the first Christian sovereign in the world—the first Christian prince who ever wielded political power—and from whose reign the political authority of Christianity commences—has been very differently estimated. According to Gibbon, whose dislike to the early Christians, perhaps, prejudiced him against their first Imperial champion, his old age was disgraced by cruelty and rapacity, while Milman and Dr. Newman, both zealous Christians, take a higher view of his character. Newman writes,¹—‘Constantine is our [Christian] benefactor, inasmuch as we who now live may be considered

¹ ‘Historical Studies.’

to have received the gift of Christianity by means of the increased influence which he gave to the Church.' He was its first avowed protector who relieved it 'from the abject and suffering condition in which it had lain for three centuries.' The American writer, Dr. Draper,¹ who seems, in some respects, to regret the downfall of pagan Rome, says,—

Ecclesiastical authors have made everything hinge on the conversion of Constantine, and the national establishment of Christianity. The medium through which they look distorts the position of objects, and magnifies the subordinate and the collateral into the chief. Events had been gradually shaping themselves in such a way that the political fall of the city of Rome was inevitable. The Romans as a people had disappeared, being absorbed among other nations—the centre of power was in the army.

Milman writes exultingly, after the triumph of Constantine over his pagan rivals, and the

¹ 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' vol. i.

complete establishment of his power,—‘Christianity may now be said to have ascended the Imperial throne; with the single exception of Julian, from this period the monarchy of the Roman Empire professed the religion of the Gospel.’ The apostacy of the Emperor Julian, and his attempt to restore the ancient paganism of his country, though it may have slightly delayed the progress of Christianity, interposed no effectual obstacle to its advance. Julian himself, from all accounts, was a man of many noble and estimable qualities, though probably over-praised by Gibbon, who describes him as almost a model of perfection. But this Emperor’s dislike to Christianity seems to have been more caused by the aggressive and violent conduct of many of the Christians than from any philosophical distrust of Christian doctrine; for the advocates of the new faith, *when in political power*, often acted in a manner contrary to the spirit of the faith itself, as even Milman admits,¹—

¹ ‘History of Christianity,’ vol. i.

In the intoxication of power, the Christian, like ordinary men, forgot his original character, and the religion of Jesus, instead of diffusing peace and happiness through society, might, to the superficial observer of human affairs, seem introduced only as a new element of discord and misery into the society of men.

Indeed, the disregard of many early Christians for all merit or virtue in unbelievers is one of the most disgraceful and surprising facts in Christian political history. According to some Christian enthusiasts, those who rejected the Gospel might as well commit every imaginable crime as lead a virtuous life, for in either case, their souls were alike lost. The expression, 'Without Christ, no salvation,' was interpreted as a direct and hopeless condemnation, not only of those who violated his principles, but also of those who were ignorant or incredulous about himself, although it must be acknowledged that some who either repudiated or were ignorant of the Gospel history, were more obedient to the precepts which it enjoined than some who knew it almost by

heart. This sentiment, at least in the perversions of which it seems capable, has in Christian political history, sanctioned the most atrocious cruelties and persecutions. Some mild and charitable Christians have in all ages maintained that it simply means no salvation for those who are without the virtuous moral qualities approved and enjoined by Jesus, but which are not exclusively confined to Christianity. But a different construction was sometimes placed upon this expression by professed Christians, maintaining that all who never heard of Jesus or disbelieved Him were alike eternally condemned, no matter whether their lives and characters were good or bad. The practical result of this dangerous interpretation was relentless persecution, instituted by sincere Christians first against Jews and pagans, as being the first foes to the only religion through which they supposed salvation possible. And centuries later, in Christian history, the same narrow-minded bigotry ex-

cited fellow-Christians against one another with fearful intensity, each contending faction in the distracted Christian Church believing the other hopelessly condemned in the sight of Heaven, owing to their false constructions of the precepts of Jesus, and without the least reference to personal conduct and character. The declaration of Jesus himself, that He was not sent to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, was thus practically ignored by many of his earnest but disobedient followers, who visited and threatened both 'righteous' and 'sinners' among unbelievers with temporal penalties and eternal punishment. There can be no doubt that the stern bigotry of some Christian teachers disgusted and repelled many who could not understand that Christianity was a religion of justice and mercy when taught and professed by those who treated all unbelievers with injustice and cruelty. But though Julian himself was evidently a superior man, and quite sincere in his efforts to repress Christianity, it was utterly

beyond his power either to do so, or to revive the waning strength of Paganism. All the energy and enthusiasm of the empire were on the side of Christianity, and Julian stood almost alone, for no pagan orators or preachers of any ability appeared. The ancient Deities remained mute and invisible, while the alleged miracles and Resurrection of Jesus were being proclaimed to the wavering minds of the pagans by preachers whose sincerity at least could not be doubted. After the death of Julian, the progress of Christianity increased almost without any opposition, and a few years later (under the Emperor Theodosius) the religion of Jupiter was publicly abolished, and Christianity recognised as the established and sole religion of the Roman Empire. But that empire itself, soon after the death of Theodosius (A.D. 395), was attacked by the Northern barbarians of Asia and Europe. The eminent French statesman, and political writer, M. Guizot, thus describes the first acquaintance of these Northern tribes with the early Chris-

tians and Roman civilisation, at the fall of the Roman Empire,¹—

Among the barbarians themselves, or their barbarian ancestors, many had been witnesses of the grandeur of the [Roman] empire; they had served in its armies, they had conquered it. The image and name of Roman civilisation had an imposing influence upon them, and they experienced the desire of imitating, of reproducing, of preserving something of it. . . . The Christian Church was a society regularly constituted, having its principles, its rules, and its discipline, and experiencing an ardent desire to extend its influence, and conquer its conquerors. Among the Christians of this period—among the Christian clergy—there were men who had thought upon all moral and political questions, who had decided opinions and energetic sentiments upon all subjects, and a vivid desire to propagate and give them empire. . . . It [Christian Church] attacked barbarism, as it were, upon every point, in order to civilise by ruling over it.

Among the Goths especially—one of the most powerful of the Northern nations who accomplished the destruction of the Roman

¹ ‘History of Civilisation,’ p. 56.

Empire—Christianity was soon embraced. Professor Maurice says,¹ ‘With much joy, though amid much confusion, these barbarians welcomed the tidings of a Redeemer in whom men could own at once their Lord and their brother.’ In fact, Christianity seems to have met with little serious opposition among European nations, and thus it effected a steady and singularly complete conquest. Milman observes,²—

In Gaul, Spain and Britain, there was no old or established or national religion. The ancient Druidism had been proscribed as a dark and inhuman superstition, or had gradually worn away before the progress of Roman civilisation. After it had once passed the Alps, Christianity made rapid progress.

Respecting the triumph of Christianity over Northern Europe, Dean Stanley³ writes,—

Another and a wider sphere was in store for the progress of the [Christian] Church than its own

¹ ‘Religions of the World.’

² ‘History of Christianity,’ vol. ii.

³ ‘History of the Eastern Church.’

native regions ; another and a nobler conquest than that of its old, worn-out enemy on the tottering throne of the Cæsars. The Gothic tribes descended on the ancient world, the fabric of civilised society was dissolved in the mighty crisis ; the fathers of modern Europe were to be moulded, subdued, educated. By whom was this great work effected ? Not by the [Roman] empire—it had fled to the Bosphorus—not by the Eastern [Christian] Church ; its permanent conquests were in another direction. In the Western, Latin, Roman clergy, in the missionaries who went forth to Great Britain and to Germany, the barbarians found their first masters ; in the work of controlling and resisting the first soldiers of the Teutonic tribes, lay the main work, the real foundation, the chief temptation of the Papacy. From the day when Leo the Third placed the crown of the new Holy Roman German Empire on the head of Charlemagne, the stream of human progress and the stream of Christian life, with whatever interruptions, eddies, counter currents, flowed during the next seven centuries in the same channel.

In the East, however, the Persian followers of Zoroaster, worshippers of the Sun, resisted Christian doctrines with far more determina-

tion than either Greeks or Romans. Gibbon says,¹—

The principles of Christianity were easily introduced into the Greek and Syrian cities, but they do not appear to have made any deep impression on the minds of the Persians, whose religious system [that of Zoroaster], by the labours of a well-disciplined order of priests, had been constructed with much more art and solidity than the uncertain mythology of Greece and Rome.

Modern history confirms Gibbon's statement—for to this day the ancient Sun worship of the Persians remains among their descendants, the Parsees, many of whom are people of education and intelligence, chiefly merchants, who thus have constant intercourse with persons of other religions. Yet their singular faith has resisted all teachings of Christianity and attacks of Mahometanism, while the Paganism of Greece and Rome has altogether vanished from the world. Still the Christians, increasing steadily in numbers, in-

¹ 'Decline and Fall,' vol. ii.

telligence, and political power throughout Europe might, perhaps, in time have converted the Persians, had not Mahometanism—a new enemy—suddenly appeared fiercely denouncing the religion of Zoroaster, and every kind of idolatry, and though viewing Christianity with comparative respect, still firmly claiming to supersede it in importance and veracity, as God's *last* revelation to mankind. Professor Maurice observes,¹—

The aspect of Christianity in the first ages, is that of a youthful, growing, victorious doctrine, its roots laid in the depths, its branches spreading over the earth, and reaching to heaven. But then came Mahometanism, utterly exterminating that Persian doctrine with which the Christian teachers had so unsuccessfully fought.

The ancient Persian, or Parsee doctrine, however, was never *exterminated* by Mahometanism. Though its political power was destroyed, and its votaries banished from their own country, they are now among the wealthiest

¹ 'Religions of the World,' p. 213.

inhabitants of Bombay and Calcutta, living entirely under Christian rule, and probably more loyal to it than either Hindoos or Mahometans. Yet only for the opposition of their ancestors to Christianity, it is possible that India, Burmah, and China, professing then, as now, the ancient religions of Brahminism and Buddhism, might have been either converted to Christianity, or at least made acquainted with it. But these vast countries were in those times too remote for Christian missionaries, who, usually coming from Europe, in vain tried to convert the Persians, interposed between them and those idolatrous nations which were almost unknown to either the Greeks, Romans, or Jews of antiquity. But Christianity effected a complete conquest of Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire, through its vast dominions from Turkey to Britain and Portugal, and encountering little opposition from either the Scandinavian worshippers of Odin, or from the Druid priests of Britain, spread itself over all the north of

Europe, and gradually extinguished every other religion in it. Yet, in reviewing the progress of Christianity and Mahometanism over the world, it must be owned that the success of both was often achieved by force as well as by argument—by political conquest as well as by mental conviction. The triumph of Mahometanism over Asiatic and African heathenism was decisive, rapid, and permanent. The Parsees, it is true, rejected Mahometanism with the same firmness with which their ancestors had rejected Christianity, and they were therefore expelled from Persia, their native country, which was then occupied and peopled by Mahometans. But no heathen teacher or orator appeared in either Asia or Africa to protest against the new faith of Mahomet, or to revive the expiring idolatry around him. The progress of Christianity, however, was for a long time checked and delayed by the violence of Christian preachers and rulers, which naturally alienated and shocked many intelligent minds

among both Jews and heathens. For while the persecuting Mahometan appealed to the Koran as his authority for banishing or oppressing 'unbelievers,' the Christian persecutor could plead no such justification, when his professed religion condemned his conduct more completely than all the complaints or sarcasms of its foes. Gibbon states,¹—

The progress of Christianity has been marked by two glorious and decisive victories over the learned and luxurious citizens of the Roman Empire and over the warlike barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who subverted the empire and embraced the religion of the Romans. The Goths were the foremost of these savage proselytes. . . . Their fiercer brethren, the formidable Visigoths, universally adopted the religion of the Romans. In their long and victorious march from the Danube to the Atlantic Ocean, they converted their allies, they educated the rising generation. During the same period Christianity was embraced by almost all the barbarians who established their kingdom on the ruins of the Western Empire.

¹ 'Decline and Fall,' vol. iv.

Upon this subject the authors of the 'Unseen Universe' remark,¹—

In the course of a few hundred years we find the whole Roman Empire converted to Christianity, while, however, in Arabia and the East it appears either to have made very little progress, or to have become corrupted into something very different from that which we read of in the New Testament. It had not become the national religion of the Arabs, and we can well imagine that this nation, with their pretensions to be regarded as the most ancient representative of the Semitic race, would not look kindly upon a religion that took its origin in a rival branch of the same family. We can further imagine that with such a feeling they would be very ready to welcome a religious system that should spring up among themselves. Such an opportunity was offered them by Mahomet. Acknowledging, in some measure, the claims of Moses and Christ, Mahomet yet claimed for himself and his religion superiority over his rivals, flattering by this means the vanity of his own countrymen, who considered themselves the elder branches of the Semitic race.

Thus nearly all Asia and Africa resisted the

¹ P. 31.

efforts of Christian missionaries; for, except in part of Egypt, Abyssinia, and Armenia, Christianity took no permanent root, save about Mount Lebanon in Syria, where the native Maronites have always been Christians, and have chiefly become Roman Catholics. But Persia, Arabia, Tartary, Mongolia, and China, with the vast Empires of India and Burmah, continued to maintain their ancient religious systems, till the fierce outbreak of Mahometanism, so unlike the peaceful rise of Christianity, assailed them with argument and force combined. Gibbon observes,¹ alluding to the great change wrought by Mahomet upon the Asiatic nations,—

The Arabs or Saracens who spread their conquests from India to Spain, had languished in poverty and contempt till Mahomet breathed into those savage bodies the soul of enthusiasm.

But Mahomet himself always professed veneration for the name and doctrines of Jesus, blamed the conduct of the Jews towards

¹ Vol. iv.

Him, and denied his crucifixion altogether, alleging that, though the Jews wished to execute Him, and were about to do so, the Almighty invisibly interfered and rescued Him from the world to which He never returned.¹ By thus preferring Christianity, however, not only to all ancient paganisms, but also to Judaism, Mahomet may justly be said to have believed Christianity the true, or at least the truest religion in the world from the death of Jesus till his own appearance on earth some 570 years later.² But though the victory of

¹ Mr. Mulheisen Arnold quotes from the Koran the following strange version of the disappearance of Jesus according to Mahometan belief ('Koran and Bible') :—'The Jews have said "We have slain Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary, the apostle of God," yet they slew Him not, neither crucified Him, but He was represented by one in His likeness.'

² Sir Walter Scott, well knowing the peculiar scorn and dislike of Mahometans towards the Jews, makes the Knight Templar (in 'Ivanhoe') exclaim when his Saracen slaves threaten the Jew Isaac, 'My slaves are true Moslems, and would scorn as much as any Christian to hold intercourse with a Jew,' and Mr. Morier, in his amusing Persian book, 'Hajji Baba,' gives the following classification as usual among Persian Mahometans :—'Christians are bad, and dogs are bad, but Jews are worse than all.' At present, however, Jews under Mahometan rule are quite free from persecution, except when any

Christianity over all the European paganisms was complete and decisive, it was rivalled by the vast and rapid triumph of Mahometanism over the greater part of Asia, and a large part of Africa. And history shows that Christianity, though so successful among irresolute pagans, made few converts among the enthusiastic Mahometans. For the religion of Jupiter inspired no enthusiasm ; it was a vague—doubtless, to some, an attractive illusion ; but it appealed to fancy and imagination only, not to the heart or conscience. It yielded completely to Christianity, and, perhaps, would have previously yielded to Judaism if the Jews had ever attempted to spread their religion, which apparently they never desired. But Mahometanism, a new and vigorous system, was the most formidable rival to Christianity that has ever appeared. It also appealed powerfully both to heart and mind, while the heroic character of its founder, his personal

sudden outbreak of fanaticism occurs among the most ignorant Mahometans, when the Jews are usually the first victims.

bravery and wonderful success in warfare—which, if not superhuman, nearly approached it—all served to inspire most ardent enthusiasm. The old religion of Arabia—a cruel, debasing superstition, which, besides being idolatrous, insisted on human sacrifices—yielded to Mahometanism as completely as the Grecian and Roman paganisms had yielded to Christianity. The two ancient superstitions alike resisted, and finally disappeared before the energetic attacks of the two new religions; but their respective triumphs were first achieved in very different ways. The progress of Mahometanism was one rapid course of political conquest, though accompanied with great moral improvement. Mahomet himself, after a glorious career, died, believed, honoured, and revered by thousands, having seen his religion established in Arabia and other adjoining countries. All his successors, either in political or religious influence, rivalled each other in respect and veneration for both his memory and precepts. But Jesus was executed as a criminal

by the earnest desire and instigation of the chief men of his own nation, who rejected his doctrine and persecuted his disciples for many years after his death. Fortunately for Christianity, however, its chief enemies, the Jews, were peculiarly disliked by the Romans, at that time the most powerful people in the known world, and were generally unpopular among other nations, owing to their proud, stern, unsocial character. And while Christianity was a persecuted faith, its followers displayed wonderful heroism in enduring every kind of penalty with firmness, and sometimes with actual delight. For the conduct of Jesus then inspired them, his calm endurance of insult, torture, and death, affording an example as well as a subject for admiration. Thus, Christians in adversity were often more worthy of the name than when armed with political authority, when having no actual example to follow they appealed for guidance to the precepts of Jesus alone, and unfortunately often placed strange and erroneous constructions

upon them. It was then that the merciful spirit of Christianity was often utterly abandoned, and professed Christians became persecutors, while suffering Jews or Pagans, as the case might be, in their turn sometimes displayed a conscientious heroism, resembling that of Jesus himself, even when rejecting Christianity. Impartial history thus proves that Christianity in political power was often, in a philosophical sense, in a state of moral weakness and degradation, while it never appeared to more advantage, nor carried the same power of conviction with it, as when enduring the most savage persecution. For *then* Christians were enabled to recal the example, as well as the words of Jesus, by their own conduct in adversity. The more, therefore, the Jews persecuted and reviled Christianity, the more it attracted the attentive interest of the Pagans, to whom it was first preached with success. Yet no earthly victory aided its first progress, but the fervent eloquence, and above all the virtuous conduct of the first Christian preachers,

as shown by Pliny's celebrated letters, astonished even unconverted Pagans, and gradually appealed even to their sceptical minds with irresistible force. The Resurrection of Jesus, so firmly maintained by his disciples, surpassed all earthly triumph. For pagan or Mahometan victories, however glorious, were in this world and for this world alone. The Resurrection was above earthly glory; it was the interposition of God himself—the interruption and violation of all natural laws, by the great Author of Nature itself, to confirm and establish the faith of One who died for its assertion. It inspired Christians with a courage which no earthly event could increase or diminish, and thus exempted them from all the changes or influences of a brief uncertain world. Schlegel, who seems to dislike Mahometanism even more than the ancient paganisms, writes,¹—

It was with the rapidity of a destructive fire, that this mighty mischief spread over the countries of Asia and a large portion of Africa. When

¹ 'Philosophy of History,' p. 319.

Mahomet died he was master of Arabia. . . . Only a few score years from his decease, and under his immediate successors, the whole of Western Asia, between the Tigris and the Euphrates, as far as the Mediterranean, Syria, and Palestine, down to Mount Taurus and the frontiers of Asia Minor, and soon again the whole northern coast of Africa, down to the opposite shores of Spain, were subdued by the disciples of the Koran, while, at the same moment, the Roman West and the Empire of Persia were menaced by the arms of these formidable invaders.

The Persian disciples of Zoroaster perhaps suffered more than any other Eastern nation in hopeless resistance to invading Mahometans, who, issuing from Arabia, did not, like the Christians, spread their religion at first in distant countries, but beginning with Arabia, their own prophet's land, where he had lived and died, extended themselves over every adjoining country. Mr. John M. Arnold says,¹—

The rapidity of the spread of Mahomet's creed is without parallel in the history of propagandism.

¹ 'Koran and Bible,' ch. 4.

In the twenty-first year of Hegira,¹ the Crescent [Mahomet's standard] floated over an extent of territory as wide as that of the Roman Eagle, and the Saracen empire may be said to have extended its dominion over more kingdoms and countries in 80 years than the Romans in 800. In Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Asia Minor, North Africa, and other countries, the Koran was introduced at the point of the sword. Thence its contents were promulgated to the frontiers of India and China.

Thus, victorious Mahometanism spread over North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, Tartary, the Caucasus, Georgia, Affghanistan, and great part of India; the few Christians that fell under its political yoke, the Armenians and Nestorians in Asia Minor and Persia, the Maronites in Syria, and the Copts in Egypt, were treated with comparative toleration; but the unfortunate Parsees, the aboriginal Persians, adhering to the religion of Zoroaster, were banished.

¹ The escape and flight of Mahomet from his idolatrous fellow-Arabians before their conversion to his religious system. This is the Mahometan date, instead of either the birth or death of Mahomet, which both were in Arabia.

altogether, and, like the Jews over again, fled to other countries, strictly preserving their religious opinions. Their wanderings, however, unlike the Israelites, were entirely confined to Asia, and India became their chief place of refuge, where their descendants remain mostly as traders or merchants, making large fortunes, but taking little or no political part in the government of any country, and never attempting the conquest of their former land, which remains chiefly inhabited by Mahometans, and completely under their rule. Mr. J. M. Arnold¹ says, ‘Mahometanism made common cause with the [Christian] Church in protesting against paganism, and precluded the possibility of pagan powers uniting against Christianity.’ Thus these two rival religions, Christianity and Mahometanism, spread over Europe, Asia, and part of Africa, European paganism vanishing entirely before the preaching of Christianity, while Asiatic idolatries disappeared before Mahometan

¹ ‘Koran and Bible,’ p. 241.

warriors whenever they came in contact.¹ In Europe, Christianity penetrated, chiefly by peaceful means, into every part—from Iceland, Lapland, and the North of Russia to the Southern limits of Spain and Portugal, while Mahometanism in Asia hardly extended beyond India,² and never entirely prevailed in that country. The ancient idolatries of India, Burmah, and China, have therefore remained undisturbed, and in all

¹ Mr. Arnold writes of the implacable hostility of Mahometanism towards all paganism and idolatry,—‘With few exceptions the maxim of the Koran “Fight against them until there be no opposition in favour of idolatry, and the religion be wholly God’s,” has ever been strictly carried out. No alternative was offered to the pagan; he had to choose between an immediate recantation of his opinions or a cruel death. The Christian was permitted the privilege of a compromise for the preservation of his life and property by the payment of a heavy tribute.’ Mr. Arnold adds (p. 478), ‘The non-Christian population of the globe naturally divides itself into Jews, pagans, and Mahometans, but a single glance will convince us that these three distinct masses are of very unequal magnitude. . . . The Jews number about five millions, the pagans 300 to 400 millions, the Moslems cannot be reckoned at a lower figure than 200 millions.’

² Except the Tartar invasion of China under Genghis Khan, which, however, resulted in the conquerors embracing the idolatrous faith of the conquered Chinese, and was therefore a loss rather than gain to the political power of Mahometanism; but this case was isolated.

respects the same as ever, except when the English government in India has politically interfered to check certain barbarous rites (such as the Suttee widow-burning and human sacrifices to the idol Juggernaut, and the murderous crimes of the Thugs). But Mahometanism, though successful in Asia and Africa, wherever it appeared, was naturally suited to those parts of the East of Asia only a short triumph followed by its almost complete defeat and failure in Europe. The Moors, after conquering Spain, where for many years they had established a Mahometan kingdom, invaded the South of France, but were defeated, driven back into Spain, and eventually expelled from there to the opposite shores of Africa, whence they came, by the Spanish Christians. Mr. Arnold observes,—

With the exception of Spain, Mahometanism has never yet been suppressed in any country where it had taken root; on the contrary, as it is almost

the only creed beside Christianity which proselytises—it makes, perhaps, more converts than all the others put together. There are at this day [Mr. Arnold writes in 1866] at least three Mahometan empires—Turkey, Persia, and Morocco.¹

In the South-East of Europe Mahometanism certainly achieved its most important political victory over Christianity by the capture of Constantinople, and conquest of the Eastern part of the old Roman Empire. These triumphs were achieved by the Turks, a Tartar tribe, under Mahomet the Second, a man in many respects not unworthy of his great namesake, and who, according to Gibbon, treated his Greek Christian subjects with more mildness and toleration than any of his Mahometan successors.² But some four centuries before

¹ Persia, however, can hardly now be called an empire. It is a weak kingdom, without a navy, bounded by the Russian dominions on the North-West, by Herat and Affghanistan in the East, and by Turkey in the West, while the Caspian Sea to its North is now a Russian lake, for all practical purposes.

² Sir Archibald Alison says ('History of Europe,' vol. iv.), 'The Pope in vain endeavoured to form an effective league of Christendom against the Mahometans; the strength of Europe held back, that of Asia was brought to the very front by the

this great triumph of the Turkish Mahometans, the Crusades in Syria had brought Christianity and Mahometanism into fierce collision.

Upon this subject Sir Walter Scott, whose famous novels¹ have so admirably described these religious wars, says,²—

The hare-brained and adventurous character of these enterprises—the idea of re-establishing the Christian religion in the Holy Land, and wresting the tomb of Christ from the infidels, made kings, princes, and nobles blind to its hazards, and they rushed, army after army, to Palestine. . . . The obvious danger of teaching a military body to consider themselves as missionaries of religion, and bound to spread its doctrines, is that they are sure to employ in its service their swords and lances. The end is held to sanctify the means, and the slaughter of thousands of infidels is regarded as an indifferent, or rather as a meritorious action, provided it may occasion the conversion of the remnant,

genius of Mahomet the Second, Constantinople was taken, the Greek empire overthrown, and a chasm made in the defences of Europe against Asia, which all the efforts of later times have been scarcely able to repair.’

¹ ‘Ivanhoe’ and ‘Talisman.’

² ‘Essay on Chivalry,’ p. 16.

or the peopling their land with professors of a purer faith.

England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy sent their Christian troops to rescue, as they termed it, the Holy Places, where the life of Jesus was spent, from the power of the Mahometan Saracens, and for a short time they succeeded in this; but they never made many converts to Christianity from among their Moslem foes, and perhaps hardly tried. Indeed, their violence of conduct and language towards all Mahometans, especially against Mahomet himself, who had certainly rescued Arabia from a cruel and degrading idolatry, and whom they usually called a wicked impostor, a child of Satan, &c., was not likely to convince Mahometans of the mild and charitable spirit of Christianity. For it seems that Mahometans usually both regarded Jesus and treated Christians with far more respect and toleration, till they came in contact with the armed and fanatical Christians of Europe, whose religious

bigotry rivalled their own, besides being totally opposed to Christian precepts. The eminent French statesman, M. Guizot, thus describes the Crusades,¹—

The whole of Europe joined in them—they were the first European event. Previously to the Crusades, Europe had never been excited by one sentiment, or acted in one cause—there was no Europe. The Crusaders revealed Christian Europe. The French formed the van of the first Army of Crusaders, but there were also Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and English. . . . The Crusaders were the continuation, the zenith of the grand struggle, which had been going on for four centuries between Christianity and Mahometanism.

At the time of the Crusades, several orders of knighthood were instituted among the European Christians—of whom the Templars and the Knights of St. John, or the Hospitallers, were the most formidable. These ‘military monks,’ as Sir Walter Scott calls them, were, according to Mr. Hallam,²—

Instituted in the twelfth century for the sole pur-

¹ ‘History of Civilisation,’ vol. i.

² ‘Middle Ages,’ vol. i.

pose of defending the Holy Land. Large estates, as well in Palestine as throughout Europe, enriched the two institutions, but the pride, rapaciousness, and misconduct of both, especially of the Templars, seem to have balanced the advantages derived from their valour.

Gibbon¹ writes about these two orders rather sarcastically,—

The flower of the nobility of Europe aspired to wear the cross, and to profess the vows of these respectable orders. The austerity of the convent soon evaporated in the exercise of arms, the world was scandalised by the pride, avarice, and corruption of these Christian soldiers. But in their most dissolute period, the Knights of the Hospital and Temple maintained their fearless and fanatical character; they neglected to live, but they were prepared to die, in the service of Christ; and the spirit of chivalry, the parent and offspring of the Crusades, had been transplanted by their institution from the Holy Sepulchre to the isle of Malta,

where, in Gibbon's time, a small remnant of the Knights of St. John still resided long after the extirpation of their unfortunate brethren of the Temple. For the two orders had a very

¹ 'Decline and Fall,' vol. vi.

different history, after the failure of the Crusades, and withdrawal of the Christian troops from Syria. The Templars returned to Europe, where they settled for some time in Spain, waging fierce warfare against the Moorish Mahometan invaders, while the Hospitallers, obtaining possession of the island of Rhodes in the Archipelago, carried on constant war with the Turks, who had established themselves over the Saracen empire. Hallam observes,¹—‘Though the Crusades began in abhorrence of infidels, this sentiment wore off in some degree before their cessation;’ but this change apparently never affected these religious warriors. The only ‘infidels,’ indeed, with whom they ever fought were Mahometans, and against them, whether Saracens, Turks, or Moors, the Templars and Hospitallers waged unceasing warfare. To Mahometan minds, these Christian knights may have somewhat resembled their own Ghazees, or religious fanatics, whose implacable hatred to all religions except the

¹ ‘Middle Ages,’ vol. iii.

Mahometan was equalled by the merciless bigotry of these Christian warriors. The Templars, however, by amassing immense wealth, gradually incurred the jealousy of the French and Spanish governments, and the Order was eventually suppressed by King Philip IV. of France, with the sanction of the Pope, in the fourteenth century; but the Hospitallers, who seem to have adhered rather more to their original principles of devoted self-denying hostility to 'infidels,' held the island of Rhodes gallantly against the Turks for many years, but at length, forced to retire before superior numbers, they settled themselves in the island of Malta, where they waged a continual warfare against Mahometans whenever they had the opportunity. The Abbé Vertot, in his remarkable history of these knights, describes their astonishing valour when almost abandoned by Christian nations, and opposed to the united forces of Turks, Saracens, and Algerines. But as the Christian nations of Europe increased in wealth, knowledge, and numbers, their national rivalries and

jealousies increased also. The same feeling of Christian union which had sent champions from all these nations alike to the Crusades, banded together for one common cause,¹ ceased to exist, and the Knights of Malta became as the remnants of a past age, the last representatives of an almost extinct state of feeling. Ceaseless warfare against 'unbelievers' was their sole object, and the political dissensions of Christendom yearly increasing in importance and intensity, utterly confounded them, as they consequently, became less aided or reinforced by the Christian nations. Like the Templars, though in a less degree these knights were also became gradually more unwarlike through time, which, Verays, hastened the death of one of their Grand Masters, through chagrin and vexation at being unable to restore the former strict discipline. Vertot states that Henry VIII. of England, after his secession

¹ As Hallam observes ('Middle Ages,' vol. i.), 'The Crusades invaded all the Western nations of Europe, without belonging particularly to any one, yet France was more distinguished than the rest in most of those enterprises.'

from the Church of Rome, forbade his subjects enlisting among the Knights of Malta. These checks from Christian princes and governments were more fatal to these religious Orders than all the power of Mahometans. The Knights of Malta, after bravely repulsing the combined forces of Turks, Saracens, Egyptians, and Algerines, during the celebrated siege, became gradually weaker and less aggressive, and the Protestant movement in Europe hastened their decline; for Christians, then, began to persecute and destroy each other with a rancour and bitterness hitherto reserved for 'unbelievers' alone, and for this change in European sentiment these knights were quite unprepared. Yet, though few in number, and comparatively unwarlike, they retained possession of Malta till they were expelled by Napoleon, after whose capture Malta was annexed by the English, and the rest of the knights, the last remnant of the Crusaders, retired to Rome.

Although in their best days these two Orders showed great bravery and heroism,

their fanatical hatred to all unbelievers probably retarded rather than promoted the progress of Christianity. For though Mahometans had certainly spread their religion chiefly by violence, they could always appeal to the conduct of their warrior prophet, Mahomet, and the doctrines of the Koran in justification. But these Christian knights, if they had ever condescended to argument, would have found their religion utterly opposed to their conduct from first to last. The result of their efforts proved how little service their fanatical bravery did to the Christian cause. The peaceful, calm eloquence of St. Peter and St. Paul, and subsequently of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, converted numbers of intellectual heathens to Christianity, while the fierce bigotry of Christian warriors made all unbelievers, whether Jews or Mahometans, naturally distrust a religion whose champions so completely violated its most solemn precepts.

But the unequal contest between Europeans brought from a distance, when the means of

transport were hazardous and difficult, very different from these later times, and native Mahometan Saracens of Arabia and Syria, at last ended in the abandonment and failure of Christian invasion, and Mahometans remained in triumphant possession of that interesting country from whence the Christian faith was originally brought. But during this extraordinary war between these two great rival religions, the Jews, on whose Scripture history Christian Bible and Mahometan Koran were each founded, were themselves alike detested by both Christians and Mahometans, much more than by the pagans of the Roman Empire. Yet in many points these two religions agreed; the doctrines of Jesus and the subsequent doctrines of Mahomet, alike diverted their respective followers from the pure Deism to which the Jews steadily adhered, regarding both Jesus and Mahomet as impostors, either self-deluded or deceiving. Mr. Arnold thus describes Mahometan views of Judaism and Christianity,—

They [the Mahometan Arabs] thought the Jews in rejecting their last Prophet [Jesus] had forfeited their ancient dignity, and they considered the Christians had run into the opposite extreme by ascribing to Him a divine character, and surrendering the doctrine of the divine unity. They deemed the time now come for them to have a Prophet of their own, who would restore the religion of Abraham and put an end to the state of ferment into which the peninsula [Arabia] had been thrown by the concussion of Judaism, Christianity, and the idolatry which they inherited from their forefathers.¹

It appears very extraordinary that the votaries of three religions, having one common root—belief in God and a future state, who were also agreed in abolishing the idolatry

¹ Mr. Arnold also quotes the following fine passage from the Koran, on the chief attributes of the Deity,—

‘There is no God but He, the living, the self-subsisting; neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him; to Him belongeth whatsoever is in Heaven and on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him, but through his good pleasure? He knoweth that which is past and that which is to come unto men, and they shall not comprehend anything of his knowledge, but as far as he pleaseth. His throne is extended over Heaven and earth, and the preservation of both is no burden unto Him.

and human sacrifices of the vanishing pagan world — who had thus done so much in separate ways for the good of mankind, should yet have detested and persecuted each other with a ferocity not surpassed even by pagans themselves. Yet such is the fact recorded by undisputed history. Mr. Bosworth Smith, who has evidently studied both the Koran and life of Mahomet with close attention, says,¹—

The immemorial quarrel between Christianity and Mahometanism is after all a quarrel between near relations. I would almost call it [Mahometanism], remembering Mahomet's intense reverence for Christ, the only form of Christianity which has proved itself suited to the nations of the East.

This is certainly going very far in Mahometan advocacy, and he proceeds,—

Mahometanism is the one religion in the world, beside Christianity and the Jewish, which is strictly and avowedly monotheistic. The three creeds are branches from the same parent stock, not

¹ 'Mahomet and Mahometanism,' p. 182.

different stocks, and they all alike look back to the majestic character of Abraham as the teacher of the unity of God.

Mr. Smith, who vindicates the character and doctrine of Mahomet from many accusations, and whose knowledge of Mahometan countries and people makes his opinions very valuable, continues,¹—

If Christians generally were as ready to confess Christ, and to be proud of being his servants as Mahometans are of being followers of Mahomet, one chief obstacle to the spread of Christianity might be removed; and the two great religions which started from kindred soil—the one from Mecca, the other from Jerusalem—might work on in their respective spheres; the one the religion of progress, the other of stability; the one of a complex life, the other of a simple life; the one dwelling more upon the inherent weakness of human nature, the other on its inherent dignity; the one the religion of the best parts of Asia and Africa, the other of Europe and America—each rejoicing in the success of the other—each supplying the other's wants in a generous rivalry for the common good of humanity.²

¹ P. 232.

² Apparently, however, these views will not, for many

During the conflicts between Christianity and Mahometanism in the South of Europe, and between Mahometanism and the various idolatries of Asia, the natives of those countries where neither of these religions penetrated—China, Burmah, part of India, and the greater part of Africa—adhered to their primitive paganism, but were quite unaggressive. Retaining political independence, they, for the most part, remained within their own frontiers, and mingled little with the rest of the world, while the homeless Jéws and Parsees, socially despised and politically powerless, were thankful to obtain mere toleration, and never attempted either to regain political power, or to make converts to their religious systems. But the political strife between Christianity

years at least, be realised. For certainly, at present [1877], the political enmity in Turkey, and along the vast Asiatic frontier of the Russian Empire — between Christians and Persian, Turkish, Tartar, and Circassian Mahometans; in India, between English and Mahometans; and in Algiers, between French and Mahometans; gives little prospect of alliance between the two most powerful religions of the modern world.

and Mahometanism, which in Syria and the South-East of Europe resulted in the victory of the latter, was at length terminated by the expulsion of the Mahometans from all Europe except Greece, and the provinces south of the Danube, or immediately around it, comprised in the Turkish Empire. Even in these countries, however, Mahometanism took no lasting root—most of the Christian inhabitants, except the Albanians, who chiefly became Mahometans, retaining their faith, and viewing both Mahometan religion and rule with the utmost detestation.

The wars among Mahometans themselves—Turks, Persians, and Saracens—also greatly contributed to the decline of their political power, and with them, unlike the Christians, loss of political influence was usually accompanied by the decline of their religion. Thus, after the expulsion of the Moorish Mahometans from Spain, European Turkey, then including Greece, the Ionian Islands, with Moldavia and Wallachia, alone remained under

Mahometan rule in Europe ; but the natives of these countries, with few exceptions, firmly adhered to Christianity, and chiefly to the Greek form of that religion, which was also professed by the Russians and by no other nation. As a rule, therefore, Mahometanism made little progress among its European subjects, but was peculiarly detested by them as associated with political invasion, conquest, and misgovernment. The wars which broke out between the Turkish, Persian, and Saracen Mahometans themselves in Asia, who, after the death of Mahomet, had followed his rival successors, Omar and Ali, have always prevented any firm alliance between these contending Mahometans against the Christians. As the European Christian nations advanced in numbers, knowledge, and civilisation, during the middle ages, so the Mahometans both in Asia and Africa gradually became less formidable, or at least less aggressive. The Turks, who had established themselves over the old Saracen empire, were con-

stantly fighting, both with the Arabs, whom they tried to subdue in Arabia, Syria, and Africa, and also with the Persians, whose rival kingdom, though inferior in size even to the Turkish Empire in Asia, yet maintained its independence. While Mahometanism, therefore, united and almost invincible under its great founder, was, after his death, gradually divided among hostile and jealous tribes and kingdoms, yet rivalling each other in veneration for their common Prophet—the Christian nations also were so involved in wars among themselves that an allied crusade against Mahometan rule in Syria was never attempted at the very period in history, when, instead of being a complete failure as before, such an enterprise had every chance of success. But the energy and ambition of Christian Europe, which was advancing as rapidly in civilisation, as Asia and Africa were fast receding, were suddenly roused and impelled in a new direction by the wonderful discovery of America in the fifteenth century.

This vast continent was somewhat thinly inhabited by heathen tribes, of whom the Peruvians, according to Prescott's histories, were the most inoffensive race, while the Northern tribes, all strangely termed Indians by the European invaders, were fierce and warlike, though, of course, unable to resist well-armed and disciplined Europeans. As Alison remarks,¹ at the conclusion of his work,—

That the European race, gifted by nature with an energy, a roving disposition, and a passion for gain beyond any other, was the portion of mankind to whom the mission of spreading into the remote parts of the earth was entrusted, is manifest from what they have already achieved in accomplishing it, and the stationary condition of the inhabitants of the greatest and most ancient Asiatic empires in comparison.

Thus it was reserved for Europe alone to achieve the entire conquest from end to end of this quarter of the globe, and three nations

¹ 'History of Europe.'

chiefly accomplished this vast undertaking, the British in the North and in a few of the West Indian islands, and the Spaniards and Portuguese in Mexico, Honduras, Panama, most of the West Indian Islands and all South America. Neither France, Russia, Sweden, Italy, nor Germany effected any conquest or settlement of consequence in this vast continent (except a French colony which settled in Canada), while to the nations of Asia and Africa this new world remained unknown.

But in this vast and thinly-peopled continent, the political progress of Christianity was feebly opposed from the first, and yet the Christian moralist who reads the history of this great conquest, as described by Prescott and others, will regret to find how unworthy was the conduct of the invading Christians of the faith they professed to believe and introduce. In the Southern province of Paraguay, the native Indians were converted to Christianity chiefly by the Jesuits. This celebrated religious order was established, accord-

ing to Hallam,¹ in the sixteenth century, by Pope Paul III. Hallam says that their institution has, more 'effectually than any other, exhibited the moral power of a united association in moving the great unorganised mass of mankind.' The efforts of this energetic society in Christian countries, where they always laboured to restore the Roman Catholic faith among the Protestants, generally failed; and they also incurred the censure and enmity of many Roman Catholic governments by advocating the murder of tyrants.² But in their missionary labours among heathen nations, the Jesuits appeared to far more advantage than when persecuting or slandering other Christian denominations. Their exertions in China and Paraguay, the two chief countries whose conversion they attempted, ended, however, very differently. The heathen political government

¹ 'History of Literature,' vol. i.

² Hallam ('History of Literature,' vol. ii.) quotes some expressions of the celebrated Jesuit historian, Mariana, justifying the slaying of tyrannical princes, as firmly as Milton, in his 'Iconoclast,' justifies the execution of King Charles I.

of China always checked their progress, while in Paraguay their success was almost complete.

The early conquests in the North by the British, and in the middle and South by Spaniards and Portuguese, show how often the Christian spirit was abandoned by all three nations when tempted by avarice and love of conquest. The Christian philanthropist, of whatever persuasion, who calmly studies the conduct and history of the Christian conquerors of America, will perceive a grievous resemblance in their behaviour towards vanquished foes. Mr. Prescott, in his celebrated 'Conquest of Peru,' p. 336, says,—

The right of conquest they [the Spaniards] conceived extinguished every existing right in the unfortunate natives. The lands, the persons of the conquered races, were parcelled out and appropriated by the victors as the legitimate spoils of victory, and outrages were perpetrated every day, at the contemplation of which humanity shudders.

At p. 423 Prescott writes, comparing the savage conduct of Spanish colonists and soldiers

with that of some excellent priests and missionaries like Olmedo and Las Casas,—

At the close of this long array of iron warriors we behold the poor and humble missionary coming into the land on an errand of mercy, and everywhere proclaiming the glad tidings of peace. It is the reason he would conquer, not the body. He wins his way by conviction, not by violence. It is a moral victory to which he aspires, more potent and, happily, more permanent than that of the blood-stained conquerors. As he thus calmly and imperceptibly, as it were, comes to his great results, he may remind us of the slow, insensible manner in which Nature works out her great changes in the material world that are to endure when the ravages of the hurricane are passed away and forgotten.

It is certain, however, that what between military conquest and earnest preaching, the original heathenisms were gradually suppressed, and Mexico and all South America, except a few Indian tribes, embraced the Roman Catholic faith of the Spanish and Portuguese invaders. According to the statements of Prescott and others, some of the natives of America, espe-

cially the Peruvians, were a peaceful, civilized race, and inclined to be friendly to the Europeans. But neither pagan nor Mahometan conquerors were more aggressive, merciless, or implacable than the first Christian invaders of America—whether British, Spanish, Portuguese, or Dutch—who invaded and colonised Surinam in South America. While always professing, and sometimes preaching, Christian doctrines, the European invaders, Protestant or Roman Catholic, alike violated them in their conduct towards the natives of America, both in the North and South.

In the United States and Canada, colonized by English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, and French, the Protestant religion chiefly prevailed, not, indeed, to the exclusion of any other form of Christianity, but to the exclusion of the Indian superstitions, which, however, still exist among the Sioux and other savage tribes, who have no towns or fixed residences, but, like the Araucanians of Chili, and Camanches of Mexico, still retain their

ancient independence, though not their former power, and wage desultory warfare against the Christian colonists. Yet these few and scattered descendants of the ancient native races, no longer have the least political influence, and by all accounts are steadily diminishing in numbers. But while only three or four European nations accomplished the enormous task of conquering and colonising this vast continent, the Mahometans of Asia and Africa knew nothing of America, and would have been utterly unable to effect its invasion.

Though in Mexico and parts of South America, the native Indians intermarried with the colonists, they were usually treated with great barbarity, and in some parts were utterly exterminated. Sir Walter Scott observes,¹—

The warriors whom Spain sent to the New World achieved deeds of valour against such odds of numbers as are only recorded in the annals of Knight errantry, and, alas! they followed their prototypes in that indifference for human life which is the usual companion of intolerant zeal. Avarice, indeed,

¹ 'Essay on Chivalry.'

brought her more sordid shades to complete the gloomy picture, and avarice was unknown to the institution of chivalry. The same intolerance, however, which overthrew the altars of the Indians by violence, instead of assailing their errors by reason, and which imputed to them as crimes their ignorance of a religion which had never been preached to them, and their rejection of speculative doctrines of faith, propounded by persons whose practice was so ill calculated to recommend them—all these may be traced to the spirit of chivalry and the military devotion of its professors.

The Indian superstitions have in a great measure disappeared, and among them the Sun worship of the Peruvians, which, perhaps, somewhat resembled that of the ancient Persians and their Parsee descendants. But, as if to show how avarice and the lust of conquest destroyed Christian feelings among both British and Spanish colonists, the trade in African slaves was actively carried on by both. Thus, European Christians, after discovering America, and slaying thousands of its native inhabitants, may be said to have plun-

dered another quarter of the globe to fill the void occasioned by their own previous massacres. This extraordinary spectacle of the political triumph and moral violation of Christianity was too odious, however, for the civilised European world to long endure without remonstrance, and attempts at suppression, by which, at length, this vile traffic was abolished. Christianity (Roman Catholic or Protestant) thus became, and has ever since continued, the sole religion of the entire continent of America, from Labrador to Patagonia; nor has there ever been any attempt to overthrow it, by the few scattered Indian heathens, whose superstitions will probably vanish as completely as the ancient religion of Greece and Rome.

Meanwhile, the three great colonising nations—Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal—having lost the greater part of their conquests by the successful revolts of their colonists, acquired a very different amount of influence over the rest of the world. Portugal, the

weakest of the three, remained on friendly terms with its great colony, the empire of Brazil, which separated, rather than revolted, from it, and fell under the political rule of the same royal family. The Spaniards never attempted further foreign conquests, being constantly distracted by civil wars at home, and could hardly retain Cuba and other West India islands in subjection.

But the British, without apparently losing ambition or energy by the successful revolt of the United States, continued to push their conquests, not in Europe, but in both Asia and Africa. In the vast empire of India they encountered Hindoo and Mahometan foes, who never were able to form a firm alliance together, or resist with any continued success the superior discipline, valour, and weapons of the Europeans. The neighbouring empires of Burmah and China were also attacked by the British, who annexed a small part of their territories, these acquisitions, however, being

retained chiefly as permanent and substantial securities for the safety of British trade and commerce with these countries. But in India the English conquests have steadily advanced, never meeting with any serious reverse, till British authority has become supreme from Peshawur to Ceylon, and from Kurrachee to Aracan. Here the invading triumph of England has for the present stopped, the Affghanistan expedition (1840) being a political failure. Alison,¹ writing after this disastrous expedition, thus describes the growth of the British dominion :—

The progress of the British in India has been nothing but one series of conquests, interrupted, but not stopped, by a terrible defeat beyond its mountain barrier [in Affghanistan] which seemed to forebode that the lords of Hindostan were not destined to extend their dominion in Central Asia. The show even of resistance [to England] is at an end, independence is unknown over the vast extent of the Indian peninsula. The empire thus formed constitutes, with the tributary States which form

¹ 'History of Europe,' vol. vi.

part of it, the greatest compact dominion on the face of the earth.

The wars that have since occurred have been chiefly defensive in their origin. Of these the Sikh invasion of English territory (1846), south of the Sutlej river, was quite unprovoked, nor were the Sikhs hostile when under a regular government. But soon after the death of their sagacious ruler, Runjeet Singh, a firm ally of the English, and the murder of his immediate successors, the Sikh army, well drilled previously by European officers, whom they either murdered or expelled, without either king or general—their native prince, Dhuleep Singh, being a mere child—dashed over the Sutlej into the British dominions, without alleging any provocation, or even making a declaration of war. Although without leaders of any talent, the Sikhs proved formidable foes, owing to their previous European discipline, their great numbers, and splendid artillery. But the war, though fierce and sanguinary, was short, ending in their complete defeat, and the annexation of

their country to the British dominions. The north-west frontier city of Peshawur, which formerly belonged to the Affghan Mahometans, but had been wrested from them by the heathen Sikhs, thus fell, with the Punjaub, into the power of the English, and is now their furthest outpost on the north-west frontier of India.

After this short but important war, British supremacy in India remained undisturbed till the sudden revolt of the Sepoy native soldiers in the English service (1857). This rebellion, however, also was completely suppressed, and thus the last two wars in India have each ended in either extension or consolidation of British authority.

In Africa also, British conquests, though not so extensive, have been steadily successful. In the South, the Cape of Good Hope and Natal are both under English rule; and their neighbours to the North-West, the Dutch Boers, though independent, preserve the Christian faith, and form a barrier against the power of the Kaffirs, who, in the adjoining

Zulu country, are remarkably docile and obedient to British authority. In the East and West, the late wars against the Abyssinians, and subsequently against the Ashantees, though both successful, have not extended British dominion. Many people, however, hope and expect that King John of Abyssinia (formerly Prince Kassa), successor to the savage Theodore, and, like him, professing Christianity, may make his country more worthy of that name, and perhaps even extend its influence in the direction of the neighbouring Mahometan countries of Nubia and Egypt. In the North, the French conquest of Algiers, though achieved during this century,¹ has not hitherto extended beyond its frontier. Alison observes,²—

Algeria is a valuable conquest to France, and it has proved of immense service to that country, by affording a field for the exertion of its warlike qualities, and a school for the training of its officers and

¹ 1830 according to Alison.

² 'History of Europe,' vol. vii.

soldiers in the whole duties of their profession. But it is not a colony in the proper sense of the word ; it is a great colonial conquest. 100,000 men have painfully won, and with difficulty maintain the empire over little more than two millions of natives [Arab Mahometans] within a few days' sail of the French shores.

The Mahometan province of Tunis on the East side, ruled by a Turkish Pasha, a tributary of the Sultan, and the Mahometan empire of Morocco on its West, though both completely overawed by their French neighbours, are still independent Mahometan States. Thus, Christianity in Africa, though firmly established, seems more stationary than in Asia, where its progress is decisive and rapid.

Yet, notwithstanding these widely-spread conquests, Dr. Draper writes¹ of the first defeat of Christianity by Mahometanism, as if the effects were permanent, whereas they seem yearly diminishing—‘I know of no event in the history of our race on which a thoughtful man

¹ Vol. i.

may more profitably meditate than on this loss [to Christianity] of Asia and Africa.' Historical facts, however, prove that Christianity, now completely paramount over Europe and America, is both steadily and rapidly effecting the conquest of these two remaining quarters of the globe. The same writer says,¹ speaking of early Christianity in its rise, its political triumph in Europe and failure in Asia and Africa,—

Christianity had lost for ever the most interesting countries over which her influence had once spread—Africa, Egypt, Syria, the Holy Land, Asia Minor, Spain.² In exchange for these ancient and illustrious regions, she fell back on Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Scandinavia. In those savage countries what were there to be offered as substitutes for the great capitals, illustrious in ecclesiastical history, for ever illustrious in the records of the human race—

¹ 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' p. 34.

² This seems a strange statement, for Spain has always been Christian since the fall of the Roman Empire and decline of Paganism. Although partially conquered by Moorish Mahometans for a short time, its European inhabitants, the real Spaniards, were previously Christians, and expelled the Mahometan invaders as soon as they could.

Carthage, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople? It was an evil exchange.

However, it may be replied, that two ancient capitals superior in political interest, and nearly equal in ecclesiastical, to any of the above—viz., Athens and Rome—are now seats of Christian government, while as to Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, though all four are under the rule of the Turkish Sultan, or a tributary viceroy, they are in fact at the mercy of the Christian powers of Europe, if they chose to take them. And the political jealousies of these same Christian powers have alone hitherto prevented their doing so.

For the Russian Empire, superior in military, but inferior in naval, strength to Great Britain and France, seems destined in virtual, though not professed alliance with these two nations, to ultimately destroy Mahometan rule, not only in these ancient capitals, but throughout Northern and Central Asia. Upon this subject Sir Archibald Alison observes,¹—

¹ 'History of Europe,' vol. ii. ch. 8.

The simultaneous growth of the Russian power in Europe and Asia, and of the British empire in India and Australia, stand forth pre-eminent in this age of wonders. Great changes in human affairs—the realisation of the dreams of the Crusaders—the dwindling away of the Mahometan faith—the boundless extension of the Christian—are obviously connected with, or the direct consequences of these events. The secret of the astonishing influence of Russia in European politics is not merely her physical resources and rapid growth, but the unity of purpose by which the whole nation is animated. The ceaseless direction of Roman energy to foreign conquest gave Rome the empire of the world; that of the French to the thirst for glory and principle of honour conferred on them the lead in continental Europe; that of the English, to foreign commerce and domestic industry, placed in their hands the sceptre of the waves. Not less persevering than any of these nations, and exclusively directed to one object, rivaling the ancient masters of the world in the thirst for dominion, and the modern English in the vigour with which it is sought, the whole Russians, from the Emperor on the throne to the serf in the cottage, are inspired with the belief that their mission is to conquer the world, and their destiny to effect it.

The Russian or Greek form of Christianity, by the early separation of the Eastern Church from Latin Christianity, escaped the fearful religious wars and dissensions which distracted the Latin and Western branch of Christianity, through nearly all Europe during its great divisions and subdivisions by the Protestant Reformation; while the political power of Russia, which has so immensely increased within the last century, has assailed, and continues to assail, Mahometan power both in Europe and Asia. Alison¹ thus describes the shrewdness and success of Russian policy,—

It would never sanction an expedition like that of Napoleon to Moscow, or England to Cabul. Slowly, but steadily advancing, securing its acquisitions like the Romans, by the construction of roads and the erection of fortresses, and then successively rendering each conquest the base of operation for the next, it has succeeded for a century past, without experiencing any lasting disaster, in advancing its dominion even over the wildest regions in every direction. The Russian system is to impel the lesser States in its al-

¹ 'History of Europe,' vol. vi.

liance into foreign conquest or aggression, before they hazard their own troops in it, and to bring the latter up towards the close of the contest, when the first difficulties have been overcome, the opposite parties are well-nigh exhausted, and she may, without serious opposition, achieve decisive success.

Extending their vast frontiers from the provinces of European Turkey to the boundaries of China, the Russians, within the last fifty years, have been waging war with the Turks in Europe, the Circassians in the Caucasus Mountains, the Persians on the borders of Georgia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian, and further East, with the Tartar hordes of Khiva and Bokhara. In all this warfare, the Russians have been victorious, except when the English, French, and Italians assisted the Turks in the Crimean war. By this means alone Turkish rule was preserved, and thus the political progress of Christianity was retarded by the armed interference of three Christian powers, to protect and preserve Mahometan authority, threatened by

invading Russians, and also by the native Christian population of Turkey, who, detesting the Turkish yoke and longing for Christian deliverance, were utterly unable to free themselves from Mahometan rule, when supported by European troops even better disciplined than the Russians. But their hatred to Turkish authority continues unabated to the present time, when they have fiercely revolted against it.

The Turkish Empire in Europe, even before the Crimean war, has for many years steadily lost territory, as well as influence and military strength. Its Northern provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia, became independent under the rule of native chiefs or Hospodars, who are greatly under the influence of Russia and Austria. Even the provinces of Servia and Montenegro on the south of the Danube became nearly free from Turkish rule, under native chiefs, who were for some time tributaries to the Sultan. In the south of his European empire, the Turkish Sultan lost the

provinces of Livadia and Morea, with the Island of Negropont, and others in the Archipelago, which were united into the small Christian kingdom of Greece, first under a Bavarian, and latterly under a Danish prince; and in this kingdom the Greek or Russian form of Christianity is the established faith. The history of this Greek revolution (1824) shows what slight interest, compared to former times, Christian nations take in the political progress of their religion.¹ For years the Greeks, few in number, badly armed, and without leaders of ability, heroically resisted the forces of the Turkish Empire. At length, the Sultan summoned his Egyptian viceroy, Mehemet Ali, to assist in crushing the Greek revolution, and accordingly Ibrahim Pasha, son of the viceroy, brought over thousands of Egyptian Mahome-

¹ As an able writer in the 'British Quarterly Review,' October, 1876, remarks, 'For a while every rood of ground won from Asiatic barbarism to European civilisation was hailed as a triumph for Europe and for Christendom. But for some years past, we are taught that whenever Islam falls back and Christendom advances, it is a blow dealt to the world's happiness.'

tans to Greece to assist the Turks in suppressing the Christian revolt. The barbarities inflicted on the Christians by the Mahometans horrified many English travellers—Lord Byron, among others; but no Christian Government interfered till the allied Turks and Egyptians began a war of utter extermination against the Greeks of the Morea, when, fortunately for humanity, the English and French by sea, and the Russians by land, forcibly compelled the Mahometans to evacuate Southern Greece. But the battle of Navarino, in which the Turkish and Egyptian fleets were totally defeated by the combined English and French ships, and which was the sole means of saving thousands of Greeks from destruction, was openly regretted by some of the English Ministers,¹ who preferred a firm alliance with Turkish Mahometans to Greek emancipation, which, nevertheless, has added another Christian kingdom to the European nations. And ever since this event, Turkish power in Europe has steadily

¹ Alison's 'History of Europe.'

diminished. For the existence of Turkish rule many years before the Crimean war was undertaken for its preservation, entirely depended on the will and pleasure of Christian Europe. Either France, England, or Russia, if unopposed by the others, could certainly have overthrown it, and of course rescued Syria, the Christian Holy Land, at the same time from Mahometan power.

Yet in the strange history of political Christianity, and the changed feelings, interests, and wishes of men, the countries which were so dearly coveted during the Crusades, when united Europeans fought heroically against brave and warlike Saracens—now, when these same countries lie comparatively at the mercy of Christendom, their recovery has not even been attempted. On the contrary, it is evidently thought by many of the Christian Powers, that it is essential to the peace and welfare of Christian Europe, that Mahometan authority should be preserved, if necessary, at the cost of Christian blood and treasure, rather

than that a Christian power should possess the Turkish Empire. Thus it can hardly be said that Syria, or any other province of the Turkish Empire, is fairly in the power of Mahometans. They are merely suffered to remain under their nominal rule by the fears and jealousies of the various Christian powers themselves. But while these jealousies have prevented, and may still delay for some time the political supremacy of Christianity in the Turkish Empire, which a peculiar geographical situation enables French and English fleets to defend, the political triumph of Christianity in Asia is being steadily promoted by England and Russia, and hitherto at a safe distance from each other, so that neither has been able to arrest the other's progress.

The Russians, whom Alison terms 'the hereditary enemies of Mahometanism,' have, during the present century, made constant war upon it, from the Danube, in the East of Europe, to the border of China, in the East of Asia. They have, therefore, encoun-

tered Turks, Circassians, Persians, and various Tartar tribes along their vast boundary, and in all these different wars have been victorious, except when their Turkish foes had Christian allies.¹

Although the Persians as well as the Turks have Christian subjects, they have never aspired to political independence, and indeed some apparently prefer Mahometan to Christian rule. For since the conquest of Georgia by the Russians, many of the Christian inhabitants fled into the adjoining Turkish and Persian

¹ Respecting the political growth of Russia, which was little noticed by Europeans till about the close of the last century, Gibbon ('Decline and Fall,' vol. vi.), though usually far from credulous, seems inclined to believe an old prophecy inscribed on an equestrian statue, how the Russians in the last days should become masters of Constantinople. . . . In our own time [Gibbon writes 1782] a Russian armament has circumnavigated the Continent of Europe, and the Turkish capital has been threatened by a squadron of strong lofty ships of war, each of which could have sunk or scattered a hundred canoes, such as those of their ancestors. Perhaps the present generation may yet behold the accomplishment of the prediction, a rare prediction, of which the style is unambiguous, and the date unquestionable.' Gibbon states that in the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries of the Christian era, the reign of the Gospel and of the Church was extended over Norway, Sweden, Poland, and Russia.

territories to escape the severity of the Russian conscription laws. But in Europe, especially since the successful revolt of the Southern Greeks, the remaining Christian subjects of Turkey have been more than ever impatient of Turkish rule, and earnestly desired the assistance of Russia, who is now the dread and terror of all Mahometans, from the Turks in the East of Europe to the remote Tartars in the East of Asia.

In each of the last Russian invasions of Turkey (1826 and 1854) the Russians were compelled to retreat, in the first instance by the remonstrances, and in the second by the armed forces of France and England. But in Asia, the Russians have had to contend with Mahometans alone. Yet in this wide field of action, the feelings of other European nations have been sufficiently revealed by their avowed dread of the increase of Russian power, while Circassians, Persians, and Tartars have all yielded gradually to the steady, and apparently resistless advance of the Northern Christians,

who have not only brought the Persians completely under their control, but have conquered Khiva, Khokand, and Bokhara, all of which countries they have either formally annexed, or have quite under their influence. So completely have Asiatic Mahometans yielded to England in the South, and to Russia in the North, of Asia, that these two great European nations, overcoming every intermediate obstacle, are now only separated from each other by the mountains and tribes of Affghanistan. Thus, the English in Peshawur, and the Russians in Khiva and Bokhara, where at least their influence is paramount, now fear and mistrust each other, instead of having any reason to fear or mistrust heathen or Mahometan Asiatics. If the same spirit animated Christians now that actuated them in the time of the Crusades, and these two great powers were to make a firm alliance for the conquest of Asia, the enterprise, enormous as it may appear, judging from the history of the present century, would, apparently, not be

impossible. But, instead of any such union of Christian political strength, there exists a constant mistrust of each other in both England and Russia. Yet there seems, hitherto, no union of Asiatic Mahometans or heathens availing themselves of this political jealousy among Christians, to regain former independence. Upon this important subject of English and Russian rivalry in Asia, Sir Henry Rawlinson observes,¹—

Our position in India is strong and flourishing since the mutiny, insurrection has been rendered impossible, and the embers of discontent, save in some of the native States, can hardly be seen. . . . The power which scares away our confidence, and obliges us to embark in the troubled waters of political strife, is Russia. Observation shows that, whether from accident or design, the continuous advance of Russia towards India is certain, and that we must prepare therefore for the contact.

Another British authority, Major MacGahan, who accompanied the Russian General Kauff-

¹ 'England and Russia in the East,' p. 371.

man in the war (1873) against the Tartars of Khiva, says,¹—

The fall of Khiva must exercise a strong moral influence upon all Mahometan populations of Central Asia. Khiva was considered impregnable and inaccessible; it was the last great stronghold of Islamism in Central Asia, after Bokhara had fallen, and its conquest will tend to confirm the belief already widespread in these countries, that the Russians are invincible. . . . Bokhara is at present completely under Russian tutelage.

MacGahan, though accompanying the Russian Grand Duke Nicholas (brother to the present Emperor) and General Kauffman in the invasion of Khiva, says little about the Russian political position in Asia, referring his readers to the authority of Sir H. Rawlinson upon the subject. Another recent writer, M. Von Hellwald, member of the chief Geographical Society of Europe, writes,²—

If we cast a glance at the map, we perceive at

¹ 'Campaigning on the Oxus,' p. 424.

² 'Russians in Central Asia,' p. 304.

once the difficult position of the English in Asia. The Russian progress in Turkestan steadily saps a way to the Himalaya, and under circumstances which are, indeed, becoming more favourable to the realisation of the well-known plans for the invasion of India, from the Caspian Sea, which were conceived by Peter the Great and by Napoleon I.¹ On the western frontier of India is Persia, hard pressed by her dangerous ally [Russia] from the North, who bears down more alarmingly than ever upon Iran [Persia] between the Caspian and Aral Seas. On the East is the hostile Burmah, from which England, with her usual rapacity, tore away the maritime provinces of Aracan and Pegu. Behind the King of Burmah stood colossal China, holding the same attitude towards Burmah as Russia does towards Persia—this colossal empire, which Russian diplomacy knew how to circumvent so adroitly as to obtain possession of its northern border lands.

Von Hellwald makes the following remark—

¹ The wonderful conquests and triumphs of Napoleon in Europe were not likely to promote the extension of Christianity. On the contrary, being achieved over Christian powers, they probably retarded its progress, by rousing political animosities between Christian nations to a height previously unknown.

able observation in his chapter on the rivalry between England and Russia,¹—

It can be no subject of dispute which of the two, England and Russia, is the more civilised nation. But it is just as certain that the highly-cultivated English only indifferently comprehend how to raise their Asiatic subjects to their own standard of civilisation, whilst the Russians attain with their much lower standard of civilisation much greater results among the Asiatic tribes, whom they understand to assimilate in a remarkable manner. Under the auspices of Russia, the advance in civilisation among the Asiatics is indeed slow and inconsiderable, but steady and suitable to their natural capacities, and the disposition of the race; but they remain indifferent to British civilisation, which is absolutely incomprehensible to them.

Colonel Valentine Baker, in his remarkable book,² takes a similar view with Von Hellwald and Sir H. Rawlinson upon the increasing

¹ Von Hellwald does not mention that Affghanistan, a Mahometan kingdom—independent and hostile to Persia—a mountainous country, inhabited by a brave and warlike race, separates Persia and Bokhara, which are both under Russian influence, from the British possessions in India.

² ‘Clouds in the East,’ p. 343.

power of Russia in Asia, and its dangerous effect upon British rule in India,—

Both Bokhara and Khokand are virtually Russia ; I was laughed at when I asserted the contrary to the Koords and Turcomans. They said, the Russians may not actually occupy both countries, but the Khans are obliged to do whatever Russia tells them. Since this was written Khokand has been annexed [by Russia].

Colonel Baker thus estimates the Russian army in 1874,¹—

The active force that could be put into the field is 1,130,000 men, and to these must be added between 300,000 and 400,000 Cossacks. The new Russian army organisation is the most fearful embodiment of military power ever attempted by any nation. Russia is already spending 30,000,000*l.* annually on her army. Every year will see this fearful force growing both in strength and in efficiency with giant strides. The rapid advance of Russia, and the evident dislike to annexation shown by England, have in reality made all Southern Asia more friendly to the latter than to the former. If Russian influence is more

¹ P. 153.

potent than ours, it is because they fear her more, and have ceased to believe in us as her equal.

Colonel Baker also observes,¹—

India, that grand and valuable dependency of this country, contains a native and conquered population of nearly 200 millions. This great empire is now held by less than 60,000 British troops. It is only on the North-West that several practicable passes exist by which the security of India might be imperilled. Thus, Hindostan might be likened to a gigantic fortress, but it has this disadvantage, that the glacis is not in possession of the garrison, and that the passes themselves are held in many instances by doubtful allies.

Upon this subject Sir H. Rawlinson says,² writing in 1875,—

Instead of the two empires [England and Russia] being divided by half the continent of Asia, as of old, there is now an intervening slip of territory a few hundred miles across, occupied either by tribes torn by internecine war, or nationalities in the last

¹ P. 339.

² 'England and Russia in the East,' ch. 3.

stage of decrepitude, and traversed by military routes in all directions.

While distinguished diplomatist and gallant officer thus alike dread the advancing power of Russia in Asia, the present Premier, Lord Beaconsfield, expresses rather different views,¹—

Far from looking forward with alarm to the development of the power of Russia, in Central Asia, I see no reason why she should not conquer Tartary any more than why England should not have conquered India. I only wish that the people of Tartary may gain as much advantage from being conquered by Russia as the people of India from being conquered by this country.

The *Times*, May 6, 1876, declares,—

We would have it known that we have no jealousy of Russian advances in Central Asia, for the simple reason that we are not jealous of them—we recognise in them the necessary movements of a civilised Power harassed by the neighbourhood of disorganised tribes.

At present the kingdoms or countries of Aff-

¹ Speech in the House of Commons May 5, 1876.

ghanistan and Kashgar alone separate the British dominions in the Punjaub from the recent Russian conquests of Khiva and Bokhara. Kashgar is now under the rule of a Mahometan prince, Yakooob Khan, called the Atalikh Ghazee, and said to be a man of considerable energy and talent, but of course utterly unable to resist, without assistance, the discipline and valour of Russian troops, should they ever be at war with him.

The Affghan mountaineers, since the disastrous expedition of the English to restore an unpopular and banished prince, have enjoyed complete independence of all foreign influence, under the rule, first of Dost Mahomed, and since of his sons or grandsons. It is remarkable that, during the present century, several Oriental rulers of great ability have appeared and disappeared without being able to extend or confirm their power. Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt, though he freed himself from the Turkish yoke, and nearly dethroned his imperial master, the Sultan, was forced by the European

Christian powers to retreat, and content himself with Egypt alone as an hereditary kingdom ; but as none of his successors inherited his abilities, Egypt is now again almost a province of Turkey. Dost Mahomed, Ameer of Affghanistan, when liberated by the English, who had taken him captive to India, immediately regained supreme authority in his own country, which he transmitted to his sons ; but they, like the heirs of Mehemet Ali, were men of no ability, and by their constant quarrels were utterly unable to extend or strengthen the Affghan dominions. Runjeet Singh, called the Lion of the Punjaub, also a most sagacious ruler, was succeeded likewise by sons and relations inheriting none of his genius, who quarrelled among themselves, and were utterly unable to control their own Sikh army, whose wanton invasion of British territory led to their complete defeat, and the annexation of their country to the British dominions. Finally, in Algiers and the Caucasus, the French and Russian invaders were, for many years, bravely

resisted by the Arab and Circassian chiefs, Abdel-Kader and Schamyl Bey. These gallant warriors defended their respective countries for many years against well-armed and disciplined European foes. But the contest in both cases was too unequal to give either chief the least chance of permanent success. Within the last twenty or thirty years, both chieftains have been captured, and their countries, annexed by France and Russia, have ever since remained under their rule, without further resistance of any consequence. Yet, perhaps, some of these chieftains possessed abilities little inferior to the Mahometan conquerors of the Middle Ages — Tamerlane, Nadir Shah, Genghis Khan, Saladin, or Mahomet II. But, unlike those Moslem conquerors of old, these modern chiefs were checked and confronted on all sides by European Christians, and though able to rule their followers with ability and success, were utterly unable either to extend their political dominions, or resist European invasion. All their countries, since their deaths or capture,

have fallen more or less under European influence—except, the Affghan nation, though the undisturbed retention of their ancient city, Peshawur, by the English, proves that even this brave race consider warfare against England hopeless, except when strictly defensive among their own mountains. But the unequal strife between the increasing power of Christianity and the failing strength of Mahometanism is more strikingly shown in the state of the Turkish provinces in Europe than any part of Asia. The vast Turkish Empire, once said to comprise ‘the finest slices of Europe, Asia, and Africa,’ has been, during this century, gradually losing province after province. The successful revolt of Greece on the South, and the loss of Moldavia and Wallachia on the North, beside the partial independence of Servia and Montenegro on the North-West, materially reduce the Turkish European provinces, while even those they still retain are chiefly inhabited by Christians of the Greek Church, who heartily detest the Mahometan yoke. Since the complete con-

quest of Circassia and Georgia by the Russians, during the last few years, the Turks have been somewhat strengthened, however, by a number of Circassian colonists who prefer the rule of their fellow-Mahometans, and cordially unite with them both in dread of Russia and hatred to their Christian fellow-subjects of the Turkish Sultan. In Asia, the Turkish rule was always much firmer—the subject Armenian Christians have never aspired to political independence, while the Christian Maronites and pagan Druses of Syria, through often fighting with each other, are unable to disturb Turkish political authority. In Arabia, the cradle of Mahometanism, Turkish rule of late years, after a decline, has rather recovered strength, while the Eastern provinces of Chaldea and Assyria are now chiefly inhabited by the Koordish tribes, who, though wild and lawless, never ally themselves with Christians, and steadily adhere to the Mahometan faith. It is on the European side that this vast empire has been long threatened, and year by year its fall under

Christian power seems inevitably approaching. Sir A. Alison¹ describes the distracted state of Turkey, and writing in 1854, during the Russian invasion, thus prophesies a series of events which the history of the present year (1877) seems likely to confirm to some extent,—

Whatever the result of the conquest may be, the triumph of Christianity is secure, and the days of Turkish dominion in Europe are numbered. If the Russians prevail, the ancient prophecy recorded by Gibbon² will be realised, and the Cross will be replaced on the dome of Saint Sophia. If the Western Powers are successful, and wrest the protectorate of the Christians in Turkey from the Crescent, the triumph of the religion they profess is equally secure, and the government at Constantinople must pass into the hands of the great majority of the inhabitants of European Turkey. Power, in the end, must centre in the portion of mankind which is advancing, and pass from that which is receding, and the fact, attested by all travellers, that the Christians are rapidly increasing in Turkey,

¹ 'History of Europe,' vol. iii.

² 'Decline and Fall,' vol. vii.

and the Turks as rapidly diminishing, points to the future destiny of these realms as clearly as the handwriting on the wall did to the fate of the King of Babylon.

The immediate result of the Crimean war, however, did not apparently justify Alison's expectations, for the Russians were defeated, and Turkish rule preserved, while British and French influence over the Turks, though powerful at Constantinople, or anywhere within sight of English and French fleets, has never extended over the remote provinces, even of European Turkey. The Christian population have remained, since the Crimean war, discontented and rebellious, with occasional petty outbreaks, which have always been suppressed, till 1875, when the Christian inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina openly revolted, allied with their fellow-Christians in the neighbouring semi-independent provinces of Servia and Montenegro.

After this revolution had continued for some months, and the Turkish Government

seemed unable to suppress it, a remarkably instructive letter appeared in the *Times* from Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, upon the past and present state of Turkey. The statements and opinions expressed are peculiarly valuable, coming from this distinguished and veteran diplomatist, who was British Ambassador in Turkey during the Crimean war and long previously, and was known to have greatly assisted the Turkish Government by his energetic advice and counsel. He wrote, May 16, 1876,—

By far the greater part of a year has elapsed since the Christian insurrection in Turkey broke out, and it continues still to be the chief object of political interest in European politics. For the origin and very roots of the question we must refer to the character of the Turks as a race. To their Tartar blood, they are indebted for the despotic temper which facilitates the exercise of their power, but tends to shorten its duration. Their fanaticism impelled them to conquest, their despotism enabled them to hold the conquered in subjection, but the effect of these two principles was to keep

them in a state of isolation as to countries not yet brought under their yoke, and utter antagonism with a large majority of their fellow-subjects. Moreover, they brought their Asiatic manners into the part of Europe they subdued, as an additional cause of alienation from all but their followers in religion. Turkey, from being an aggressive power, dropped gradually into a state of self-defence, and internal anarchy. While the enervating effects of the Turkish system told with growing power upon the resources of the empire, those bordering [Christian] powers, who either were most molested by its ambition, or found most reason to reckon on profiting by its decay, had gathered fresh strength from their superior knowledge, and sounder principles of administration. To a larger increase of their subjects, they added a greater development of industry, a wiser management of their finances, and a healthier progress in secular instruction and military discipline. At the same time the Rayahs [Christian subjects of the Turks], that oppressed and naturally disaffected portion of the Sultan's subjects, had largely advanced in numbers, knowledge, wealth, the sense of degradation, and the consciousness of growth. So long as the Porte contended singly with Austria or Russia, war after war terminated in treaties adverse to Turkish in-

terests. At one time it was an actual cession of territory, at another, the elevation of some Ottoman province into a tributary state approaching to independence. Hungary, the Crimea, Bessarabia, and all Turkey, north of the Pruth, and Phasis, ceased to be parts of its empire, while the Danubian provinces [Moldavia and Wallachia] and Servia obtained, under Russian protection, privileges bordering on political separation. More than all this, Egypt fell off from the immediate government of the Sultan; and Greece, with its adjacent islands, became an independent monarchy. Events, of which some witnesses may still survive, showed to demonstration nearly 100 years ago, that the Porte had ceased to be an independent power in the full sense of that term. Such, in more recent years, was the dependence of Turkey on Christendom, that a Russian navy was admitted into the Bosphorus for its protection from the forces of Mehemet Ali, a provincial Pasha [of Egypt], that under changed circumstances its capital was saved from capture by a disastrous treaty [with Russia], and that its independence was subsequently maintained by the joint battalions of France and England.

Lord Stratford, after stating that the Turks did not fulfil their engagements to these Christian

protectors who saved them from Russian conquest by the Crimean war, then powerfully alludes to the present insurrection of the Christian subjects of the Turks in Europe,—

It would surely be a crying scandal for Christendom if the Turks, who effected their conquests in the name of religion, were left to endanger the peace of Europe, and to oppress a numerous population of Christians, deriving their ability to do so from the wealth of Christian countries, and the indifference, not to say complicity, of Christian governments. . . . Let it not be forgotten that the actual position of Turkey is one of dependence, amounting virtually to tutelage, displayed unmistakably from time to time, that they who have opened a mediation between the Sultan and his insurgent subjects must either give a stronger tone to their interference, or fall back into a state of inaction.

The *Times* (May 6, 1876), commenting on Lord Stratford's letter, thus concludes its article with an ominous threat against the Turkish Government,—

If they [Christian powers] made up their minds to go as far as Lord Stratford recommends, they

might as well go the length of dethroning the Sultan and setting up a more promising monarch. All forcible interference, all assumption of tutelage, mean conquest, or they mean nothing at all. The only possible guarantee for the execution of any reform, or for deference to the regulation of one mixed Commission, is the power and resolution to mar and to overthrow the Government which breaks its engagements.

Within a few weeks after this remarkable 'leader' appeared in the most influential of the English papers, the reigning Sultan, Abdul Aziz, was deposed, and soon after died by *alleged* suicide, and his two nephews, Murad and Abdul Hamid, were successively proclaimed Sultan, and called by some *more promising* monarchs. But the Christian revolt continued without heeding these changes in the Mahometan royal family at Constantinople. The strong censure of Lord Stratford, so long the firm friend of Turkey, upon the Mahometan Government for its treatment of its Christian subjects, will probably draw English attention closely to the evils of Mahometan

rule in Europe, which, indeed, for many years past has only existed by the assistance and sufferance of European Christian powers. Yet while Christianity is politically triumphant throughout the world—the Russians introducing it in the North of Asia, the English in the South, and even the Dutch on a small scale extending it in the islands of the Malay archipelago—it has latterly been much opposed and distrusted in Europe. For though Western and Latin Christianity was long previously divided and subdivided into hostile sections who abused and persecuted each other with extraordinary bitterness and ferocity during the Protestant Reformation, yet they all held, or professed to hold, Christian doctrines. Thus Christianity survived the violence of its internal dissensions; for when political peace was restored, Europe was found divided, certainly, between different forms of it, yet adhering, as before, to the chief doctrines of Jesus. But after the Protestant Reformation a singular distrust of the Gospel history arose among Christians;

for many learned English and foreign writers, like the philosopher Voltaire in France, and the great historians Hume and Gibbon in England, abandoned Christianity utterly, and professed a sort of Deism, resembling, to some extent, the ancient Deism of the Jews; while others again apparently distrusted and ridiculed all religious belief. Yet, though Deism and Atheism found many followers among the educated classes, especially in France and Germany, they never became the avowed principles of political government, except in France during the Republican revolution at the end of the last century. There, for a few years, all religion was publicly denounced, and an infidel Republic established of men who, although born Christians, formally decreed that there was no God, and prohibited all public or private worship of any kind as not only absurd and false, but dangerous to the political safety of the state.

At this time the Irish revolt of 1798 brought French infidels and Irish Roman

Catholics into a strange and unnatural alliance. The chief leaders of the rebellion, though born Protestants, mostly shared the views and opinions of the French Republicans, who had openly disavowed Christianity, while the majority of their followers had taken up arms to restore the supremacy of the Roman Catholic faith in Ireland. When, therefore, the French landed in Ireland to assist the rebels, who, except some European leaders, were chiefly earnest Romanists, the two allies found they held very different views.¹ The French agents declared themselves in accord with re-establishment of the Roman Catholicity during which their French allies boasted they had just suppressed in France with extreme severity—a severity, indeed, which far surpassed that of the English Government against the Irish Catholics. Here, then, was displayed the curious spectacle of the most determined foes to Roman Catholicism in their own country

¹ Plowden, Gordon, and Maxwell's Histories of the Irish Rebellion.

allying themselves with its keenest supporters in another, and united only by political animosity against England.

Yet neither Christianity generally, nor Roman Catholicism in particular, suffered permanently from these fierce dissensions among those born in the Christian faith. The fall of the infidel Government in France, and the triumph of British Protestants over Irish Catholic rebels, caused no change in the religious feelings of the majority either in France or Ireland. When political agitation subsided, Christianity was again supreme in both countries, and infidelity, effectually suppressed, in a political sense, never obtained power afterwards, though its principles are often avowed by writers of ability in private life.

Lord Macaulay¹ describes the wonderful changes in the European mind during this eventful period. Alluding to the extraordinary violence of the French infidel Republicans when in *political* power (for Voltaire, whom

¹ 'Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes.'

they nominally followed, had always advocated freedom of thought and general toleration), he says,—‘To show reverence for religion was to incur the suspicion of disaffection;’ and the reckless cruelties perpetrated by them were calculated, as history proved, to disgust France and all Europe, and to pave the way for the restoration of Christianity. For since that time the established religion of France has been the Roman Catholic form of Christianity, which remained undisturbed till the French and German war in the year 1871, when, for a few weeks, an infidel, or Red Republican party, calling itself the Commune, obtained supreme power in the capital, and put to death the Archbishop of Paris and some other priests without accusation or trial. These French Republicans showed the same ferocious spirit as their predecessors under Danton and Robespierre at the close of the last century. Like them, they repudiated not only Christianity but every other religion, and thus incurred the distrust and hostility of their own

fellow-countrymen, as well as of all European nations. Their reckless and outrageous conduct alienated from them all the most respectable Frenchmen, who perceived that, though these Communists might call themselves disciples of Voltaire, they were acting quite contrary to his tolerant advocacy of civil and religious liberty. In reality, therefore, the cause and influence of Christianity in France were strengthened rather than weakened by such disreputable foes, who attempted to suppress it only by force and lawless violence. But the power of this faction, which this time was confined to Paris alone, was soon overthrown by the French army under Marshal MacMahon, now (1877) President of the French Republic, and the Roman Catholic faith restored.

Yet though Christianity has been politically established throughout Europe, it has been and continues to be distrusted by many learned writers, especially in Germany; and these new attacks—domestic revolutions, as it were—

within its acknowledged dominions, have been far more formidable and wide-spread than those during the last century. The works of Voltaire, Paine, Gibbon, and Hume, were never so extensively read as the anti-Christian works of the present day, though all were men of superior ability to many of the modern sceptical authors. Yet amid these dangers to Christianity, there seems no tendency to agreement among its different divisions and sections—no alliance for the defence of doctrines which are common to all Christians. The old enmity between the Greek and Latin Churches still continues, while in Western Europe the controversial writings of Protestants and Roman Catholics even now show an aversion to each other's alleged superstitions or heresies, almost as intense as they could feel towards Deism, or even utter infidelity. And among the natural consequences of such disgraceful bitterness among Christians is the increasing vigour and energy with which Christianity is attacked by educated men who were born in that faith, and

whose characters are sometimes in accordance with its precepts. Two of the ablest living English writers—the one Protestant, the other Roman Catholic—Mr. Froude and Dr. Newman, who, though differing in their views of Christianity, seem each anxious for its preservation—thus mention the prevailing distrust of it in Christendom. Mr. Froude observes,¹—

The truth of the Gospel history is now more widely doubted in Europe than at any time since the conversion of Constantine ;

while Dr. Newman says,²—

For 300 years, the documents and facts of Christianity have been exposed to a jealous scrutiny. Not only have the relative situations of controversies and theologies altered, but infidelity itself is in a different—I am obliged to say in a more hopeful—position as regards Christianity. The assailants of dogmatic truth have got the start of its adherents of whatever creed, philosophy is completing what criticism has begun, and apprehensions are not unreasonably excited, lest we should have a new world to conquer before we have weapons for the warfare.

¹ 'Short Studies,' p. 278.

² 'Development of Christianity,' p. 28.

But hitherto, though anti-Christian works are much read, and issued with perfect immunity to both author and publisher, they have not, at least avowedly, actuated or influenced the political conduct of a single government. Sir G. Cornwall Lewis observes¹ with great clearness on this subject,—

All the civilised nations of the modern world, together with their colonies and settlements in all parts of the earth, agree not merely in believing in the existence of a God—a belief they hold in common with Mahometans, Hindoos, and heathens generally—but in recognising some form of the Christian religion. Christendom includes the entire civilised world—that is to say, all nations whose agreement on a matter of opinion has any real weight or authority. When, however, we advance a step beyond this point, and enquire how far there is a general agreement throughout Christendom with respect to any particular form of Christianity, and whether all Christians are members of one Church, recognising the same set of doctrines, we find a state of things wholly different. We perceive a variety of Churches, some confined to a single country, some common to several countries,

¹ 'Influence of Authority,' pp. 48–51.

but each with its own ecclesiastical superiors and peculiar creed, and each condemning the members of other Churches as heretics, schismatics, separatists, and dissenters, or at least infected with grave errors, and sometimes not even recognising them as Christians.

Sir George Lewis makes the following powerful reflections on Christianity and modern civilisation,—

The diversity of Christian creeds is the more apparent when it is contrasted with the general uniformity upon moral questions which prevails through the civilised world. Amongst all civilised nations a nearly uniform standard of morality is recognised. The same books on ethical subjects are consulted for the guidance of life, and if the practice differs, the difference is not in general owing to a diversity of theoretical rules of conduct. It will be observed that the great controversies between Christian sects either turn upon questions which have no direct bearing upon human conduct (such as the doctrine of the Trinity and Transubstantiation), or upon forms of Church government and discipline which are matters of positive institution. They rarely turn upon the moral doctrines which are involved in Christianity.

Upon these there is a prevailing tendency and approximation to agreement.

In ch. 4, p. 71, Sir G. C. Lewis makes a statement which would, perhaps, be denied by some Mahometans and Jews,—

Although there is no agreement as to the peculiar doctrines of any Christian Church, there is an agreement among all civilised nations in accepting some form of Christianity, and in recognising the Christian revelation according to some construction of its effect and intent.

Yet, surely the modern Jews, who still reject Christianity, may be considered civilised, living, as they do, chiefly among Christian nations, and sharing with them all the advantages and benefits of the same civilisation. But their history among Christian nations has, till recently, been one continued tale of injustice and oppression. Since their national dispersion, they lived, first under the rule of Roman pagans, and then under Christians and Mahometans, and were certainly better treated by the pagans than by either of the

others. In many Christian cities they were compelled to live only in certain streets called 'The Jews' quarter,' and besides legal disabilities and penalties, were exposed to constant insult, and often to actual outrage.¹ In Mahometan countries they were also despised and detested to an extraordinary degree ; yet this patient and determined race clung closely together, preserving their ancient faith and traditions, and, engaging almost entirely in trade and commerce, gradually became better treated by their Christian and Mahometan rulers. They never, however, sided with Mahometans, or even with modern Deists or Atheists, against the Christians, but took little part in political affairs. While sharing all the benefits of modern civilisation, they have generally lived in strict obedience to the laws of whatever country they inhabit ; still expecting, it is said, their national restoration, but hitherto taking no practical steps for that purpose, although political history has latterly rendered their return to Judea not only possible

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages.'

but easy, for the perplexed and bankrupt Turks would now probably be glad to sell that province to the rich Jews of Europe, if they had the offer.

In all the civilised and educated countries of Europe the Christian and Jew are almost on an equality, yet, though politically and socially united, they remain theologically nearly as much separated as any other two existing races. For the Mahometan recognises much that is good and true in Christianity, and even admits (by avowing Jesus to be the latest and truest prophet, except Mahomet) that from the death of Jesus till the birth of Mahomet, Christianity was the truest religion in the world. Even when Mahomet appeared, he enjoined great respect to be paid to the name of Jesus, and placed his religion far above either Judaism, Paganism, or any other religion, except his own. But the Jews disown the Gospel utterly, not accepting a part, like Mahometans; according to them, their fellow-countryman, Jesus, was a mere enthusiast, either deluded, or deluding;

while they join the Christians in condemning Mahometanism, and every other religious belief, as falsehood and imposture. There has always been, however, this remarkable difference between the political histories of Christianity and Judaism, which, at the present day, seems as marked as ever. The Jewish faith remains contentedly stationary, gains few converts, and hardly aspires to political influence. So exclusive and national does this extraordinary race still appear, that they seek no alliance, even with modern Deism, which seems increasing over Europe. It is true that most Deistical writers, while denying Christ's divinity and miracles, acknowledge him to have been a good and virtuous man, which the Jews have never yet publicly admitted. Dr. Farrar, indeed, says,¹ there is a great difference in the feelings of modern Jews towards Jesus, and even thinks that they now believe him their greatest and wisest prophet. But he gives no proof from modern Jewish writers of this complete change

¹ Preface to 'Life of Christ.'

of opinion, and until such proof is publicly given, the Jews must surely be supposed to still share the views of their chief men and High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas, in their rejection of Jesus, though the effects of their modern civilisation may make them censure and regret his barbarous execution. Mr. Gladstone observes,¹—

The Jews, who, taken together, are rather a large community, have hitherto believed themselves the stewards of an unfulfilled Redemption. But it seems that a portion at least of them are now disposed to resolve their expected Messiah into a typical personage, prefiguring the blessings of civilisation ;

and he adds that,—

It may be doubted whether such a modification as is thus indicated would greatly add to the moral force of Judaism.

And hitherto the Jews have remained as scattered as ever since their dispersion in Christian and Mahometan countries, steadily preserving their religion, and seeking neither their faith's propagation, nor their own national restoration.

¹ 'Contemporary Review,' June 1876.

But Christianity, besides spreading over all America, and rapidly conquering Asia, seems making a slow, but steady progress in Africa, while, except Turkey (where Mahometan government is only preserved by Christians for political reasons), Christianity is the established religion of every country, without a single exception. Earl Russell remarks,¹ and, perhaps, few men have had better means of knowing and judging than himself,—

In looking at the present state of Christianity in Europe, and the progress of opinions among the Christian communities of America, Asia, and Africa, there is much to encourage Christianity, great reason for hope and no ground for despair.

The native Christians of Asia comprise the Armenians, Georgians, Nestorians, and Maronites. Of these, the Georgians are now under Russian rule; the Armenians, a more numerous body than the Nestorians and Maronites put together, are under both Turkish and Persian authority;

¹ 'History of Western Christianity.'

while the Nestorians, of whom very few remain, live entirely under Persian rule, and the Maronites entirely under that of the Turks. None of these four denominations however enjoy complete political liberty, and far less either power or influence.

In Africa, the only native Christians are the Abyssinians and the Copts; the latter live only in Egypt, and are descended from its ancient inhabitants, but they have for centuries been in a very degraded position, under the Mahometan rule of a Turkish viceroy. The Abyssinians, though hitherto an ignorant and savage people, have now a king of their own religion and race, and have recently been able to set their Mahometan neighbours of Egypt completely at defiance. None of these native Christians of Asia and Africa have extended the political influence of their religion, and, except the Abyssinians, have always been more or less under Mahometan rule or influence. It is from European invasion or interference that they have always expected and sought intercession

and support. And it is Europe alone which has conquered not only all America, but part of Africa, and an immense part of Asia, while its influence, represented almost entirely by England and Russia, is paramount over nearly all the rest of it.

Yet it is very remarkable how completely among modern Christian nations, political jealousies have overcome those religious sympathies which, in the Middle Ages, so powerfully influenced the policy and thoughts of Europe. During the various recent wars of the English against the Sikhs, Affghans, and revolted Sepoys—of the French against the Arabs in Algiers—and of the Russians against Turks, Circassians, Persians, and Tartars—it is certain that all these three European nations regretted each other's victories, and either openly or secretly wished for the success of their heathen or Mahometan foes. In the Sikh war and Sepoy revolt, the French sympathised with the enemies of England, and during the war in Algiers, where the Arab chief, Abdel-Kader, long resisted French

invasion, and also in the Caucasus mountains, where the Circassians, under Schamyl Bey, for years bravely resisted Russian invasion, the English sympathies were decidedly with the Mahometans in both countries. The French and English have often vindicated the rights of the natives of India and Algiers to independence, each condemning the lust of conquest in the other. As to the Russian wars against Mahometanism, along their vast Asiatic boundary, English hostility is openly expressed, and the English government warmly urged to form alliances with the Mahometan rulers of Affghanistan and Kashgar, to oppose the Russian advance toward India. It was well known with what delight the English disasters in Affghanistan were viewed by both French and Russians, and it is certain that if the Russians were now defeated by any of their numerous Mahometan foes, the English, both in India and at home, would sincerely rejoice. As Mr. Froude remarks,¹—

¹ 'Short Studies,' vol. ii.

In truth, were the world wide enough for all of us [Christians] we should each advance our own way and fulfil our own mission, troubling ourselves little about mutual jealousies. The inevitable work of annexation goes forward, and as we approach more nearly to each other's frontiers, as countries lie at our feet in which we may all claim a share, we watch each other with anxiety and terror. But this is, for the most part, true, that wherever England, France, Russia, and America have set their foot, they have taken with them something better than what they have supplanted, and the farther that they can go on in the same course, the better for mankind.

For though it is generally believed that all European Christian nations have steadily improved of late years in civilisation, knowledge, and virtue, the same can scarcely be said of Mahometan races. The modern Turks, Persians, Arabs, and Tartars, seem, on the contrary, inferior to the Saracens of old, whose scientific attainments are admired and acknowledged even by Europeans of the present day. For modern Mahometans have neither the literary nor scientific genius of their ancestors, while among modern Chris-

tians both former Christian writers and also the classic authors of Greece and Rome are more studied and admired than ever. Even Persian and Saracen poets and philosophers would probably be more appreciated by modern Christians than by their own descendants, who, though alike inferior to the Turks in political strength, have always been superior to them in intellectual acquirements. Mr. Gladstone observes of the Turks,¹—‘They are not the mild Mahometans of India, nor the chivalrous Saladins of Syria, nor the cultured Moors of Spain. They were, upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity.’ For, in modern history there have been no Mahometan rulers who could be compared to either Mahomet himself, or the Saracen caliphs, Saladin² and Haroun al Raschid, nor have any great conquerors appeared among them rivalling Ta-

¹ ‘Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East.’

² Mr. Froude observes,—‘Mahometanism rapidly degenerated. The descent from Saladin to a modern Moslem despot is like a fall over a precipice.’—‘Short Studies,’ vol. i.

merlane, Nadir Shah, or Genghis Khan, none of whom, however, were bounded and checked on all sides by Christian powers, who would now probably prevent Mahometan aggression. Yet the European Christian powers, instead of denouncing all infidels alike, as those with whom friendship is impossible, and alliance disgraceful, which was the idea of most Christians in former times, now constantly advocate making treaties with them against fellow-Christians. Another circumstance, the dissensions between different Christian denominations under Mahometan rule, has always retarded and still impedes their political emancipation. The Armenians have often irritated their Persian rulers against the Nestorian Christians. And the hatred between the different Christian denominations under Turkish rule in Europe hinders their alliance, and thus strengthens their common oppressors, who detest all Christians alike. But, notwithstanding these quarrels and jealousies among Christians, their conquests are yearly extending and increasing—Mahometans and

pagans yielding to them in every part of the world where they come in contact; and this result is far from being caused by any alliance or unity of action among Christian governments. For, within the last thirty years, all the chief Christian powers of Europe have been at war with each other,¹ and profound distrust and hostility towards each other have since remained among them. No such wars have occurred during this century among Mahometan or heathen nations. Yet such is the evident strength and vitality of European Christians, compared to the steady decline of Mahometan and pagan nations, that no advantage was taken by either of these wars among Christians. In Asia alone, India, parts of Burmah, and China, the Caucasus, Georgia, Siberia, and a vast part of Tartary, and in Africa, Algiers, the Cape of Good Hope, and other settlements, remain completely

¹ England and France against Russia, Austria against France and Italy, Prussia against Austria, and lastly, France against Prussia and North Germany.

subject to English, French, or Russian influences, while the adjacent Mahometan or pagan countries are more or less overawed by their Christian neighbours. There appears nothing required now save a cordial alliance among Christian powers to complete their political conquest of the world. And the intellectual as well as political decline of all the non-Christian nations in the world will, probably, in the end induce, if not compel, a union of action as well as feeling among civilised men, who are now alone politically represented by Christians.¹ National jealousies may, and probably will, defer any such Christian alliance for many years; but the teaching of past history, as well as the present state of the world,

¹ As Mr. Gladstone observes ('Contemporary Review,' June 1876),—'The Christian thought, the Christian tradition, the Christian society, are the great, the imperial thought, tradition, and society of this earth. It is from Christendom outwards that power and influence radiate, not towards it, and into it that they flow. There seems to be one point at least on the surface of the earth—namely, among the negro races of West Africa—where Mahometanism gains ground upon Christianity, but that assuredly is not the seat of government from whence will issue the fiat of the future to direct the destinies of mankind.'

seem to indicate that this is the natural result to which the achievements of modern warfare and the efforts of modern diplomacy and education are steadily, if not rapidly, tending. It is also a historical fact that not a single country conquered by Christians has been regained by those professing any other religion. The English invasion of Affghanistan, though a disastrous failure, was never undertaken to annex that country, and the Turkish empire in Europe, the only country where Christian rule has been replaced by Mahometan, exists merely by the sufferance of Christian powers, otherwise Christian supremacy would have been long since re-established at Constantinople.

Thus, at the present time (1877), the political rule or influence of Christianity is certainly more extended than ever before in the world's history. The whole of Europe is avowedly Christian—the Turkish Empire being hardly an exception, where, only for the Christian powers, Mahometan rule would be replaced by Christian government. Africa, both North

and South, is yielding slowly but steadily to the advance or influence of England at the Cape and Natal, and of France in Algeria. In the East, Egypt is almost entirely under English and French influence ; the Khedive, unlike his great ancestor, Mehemet Ali, is now an obedient vassal of the Turkish Sultan, and his Coptic Christian subjects, descendants of the ancient Egyptians, are free from persecution ; while to the South, in Abyssinia, a native Christian ruler, Prince Kassa, calling himself King John, is friendly with England. From Egypt to Tunis, Mahometan rule prevails, and the nominal supremacy of the Turkish Sultan acknowledged by the governors of Tripoli, Barca, and Tunis. But these maritime countries have little military and no naval strength, and would certainly yield to any pressure from France or England. On the West of Algiers, the Mahometan Empire of Morocco is so far from being aggressive, that two of its towns on the Mediterranean coast, Ceuta and Melilla, are held by the Spaniards without opposition. In the last

war with the French in Algiers, the Moors, who sided with their Arab neighbours, were completely defeated, and glad to make peace on French terms. On the West, the Ashantee heathens have lately been defeated by the English, who keep them in awe from their neighbouring settlement of Sierra Leone. The vast interior of Africa still remains more unknown than, perhaps, any other part of the world, nor, indeed, has it ever been visited except by very few travellers.¹ In the South, British rule prevails over the Cape and Natal, while the Dutch settlers, or Boers, though independent alike of

¹ The following impassioned lines well describe this savage and sequestered part of the world :—

Africa ! vast immeasurable void !
 Where no imperial march of History
 Solemn resounds from echoing age to age !
 No lynx-eyed peril-affronting pioneer
 Since the beginning until yesterday
 Dared violate thy sultry somnolence ;
 Couch'd a grim Lion in thine ancient lair,
 Sullenly, self-involved, impenetrable,
 Or if one ever bearded and aroused,
 Thy winds have spurned his unrevealing dust.

[‘Livingstone in Africa,’ by the Hon. Roden Noel. Canto the First, p. 12.]

England or Holland, are Christians, and form a barrier for the British against the native Kaffirs, a warlike race, but whose hostility has diminished of late years. The whole vast continent of America acknowledges Christianity, except some Indian tribes, who still preserve a savage independence. Of these natives, the Sioux and Camanches in the United States and Mexico, and the Araucanians in Chili, seem the most considerable, but from all accounts their strength and numbers are fast diminishing. Asia—the home alike of Christianity, Judaism, and Mahometanism—has always resisted, and continues to oppose, the political progress of Christianity, but this resistance is certainly becoming weaker year by year.

For during the present century, Russia alone has encountered the Mahometan forces of Turkey, Circassia, Persia, and Tartary, all along her immense Southern frontier, and single-handed, without the slightest aid from any other power, has defeated them all in succession, wresting from them province after pro-

vince. The Russian frontier in Georgia, on the river Araxes, now borders both Turkey and Persia, who are both more or less subject to Russian influence. The resistance of the Circassian mountaineers has been overcome, and their last chief, Schamyl Bey, made captive, while, having acquired perfect control over the Caspian Sea,¹ the Russians have pushed their conquests through Tartary, annexing Khiva and Khokand, and reducing Bokhara to complete submission to their influence. All these exploits have been accomplished by this one Christian power, not only without assistance, but to the manifest alarm and irritation of the other Christian powers—England especially, who, as appears from the Crimean war, and lately from the writings of such distinguished men as Sir Henry Rawlinson and Colonel Baker, would gladly strengthen any Maho-

¹ Mr. Arthur Arnold ('Contemporary Review,' June 1876), writing on Persia, says, 'The Caspian Sea is a Russian lake. Except Persia, there is no other power which holds a foot of its shores, and by the treaty of Gulistan, it was arranged that none but the Russian flag should be hoisted in that sea.'

metan or heathen power to assist in opposing the dreaded approach of the Russians to India.

Between Russian influence at Bokhara and English direct rule at Peshawur, Affghanistan is now alone interposed, a mountainous country, held by a brave Mahometan race, descended from the ancient Parthians, who so gallantly resisted the Romans, and whose posterity seems not unworthy of them in courage and love of independence. To the North-East of Affghanistan, a Mahometan prince, Yakoob Khan (called the Atalikh Ghazee) of Kashgar, is said to be a man of ability, and has been hitherto quite independent. He rules over a vast part of Mongolia, extending to the Chinese frontier. To the South of his dominions, the remote region of Thibet is ruled by its native chief, the Grand Llama, a Buddhist prince, who has always been friendly with the English, from whose territories he is separated by the kingdoms of Cashmere and Nepaul, whose native Rajahs are likewise friendly. None of these

three rulers, however, have shown the ability or energy of Yakooob Khan, who maintains a considerable army, and has hitherto preserved the independence of Kashgar. Recent accounts, however, say that he is making treaties with the Russians, whose increasing power on his northern and western frontiers will, probably, bring them into collision with him or his successors. In India, the British during this century have not only annexed Scinde, the Punjaub, and Oude, but have greatly increased their influence over the rulers of Cashmere, Nepaul, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and also over the two princes, Scindiah and Holkar. The late reception of the Prince of Wales in India showed clearly how the chiefs of all these countries now consider themselves more or less under the direct or indirect authority of England.

The recent English wars against Burmah and China resulted, as usual, in the complete defeat of both these heathen monarchies, who, after every war, are more and more subject to

British influence. The wars of the Dutch in the islands of Borneo and Java with the natives have likewise ended in the steady triumph of the Europeans ; while the English in their vast colonies of Australia and New Zealand are now completely supreme. In the latter country, though so much smaller than Australia, the Maori natives, being numerous and warlike, for some years fought bravely against the English ; but their resistance has now entirely ceased : while Australia and Tasmania, being thinly inhabited, have never made any organised or regular opposition to British soldiers and colonists.

Yet, notwithstanding this vast increase of Christian power and influence, it must be owned that Mahometanism, among the conquered races, steadily holds its ground. Mr. Mackenzie Wallace, in his able work on Russia (vol. ii. chap. x.), thus compares the different position of Christianity when opposed to paganism and Mahometanism :—‘ The Tartars cannot unconsciously imbibe Christianity as the

Finns have done. Their religion is not a rude, simple 'paganism, but a monotheism as exclusive as Christianity itself.' It may safely be said that Christians are impervious to Islam, and genuine Mussulmans impervious to Christianity; but between the two [in the Russian Empire] there are certain tribes which present a promising field for missionary enterprise. In this field the Tartars show much more zeal than the Russians. 'Both clergy and laity in the Russian Church are, as a rule, very tolerant where no political questions are involved.' The complete triumph of Christianity over all European paganism, including that of Finland, is a remarkable contrast to its comparative failure hitherto among Mahometans. As Mr. Wallace further observes,—'He [a Mahometan] has already a theology and a prophet of his own. Perhaps he will show you more or less openly that he pities your ignorance, and wonders that you have not been able to *advance* from Christianity to Mahometanism;' for, according to Mr. Wallace, modern Mahometans of education,

while feeling a sincere respect for Moses and Jesus Christ, believe them both to have been 'entirely superseded by Mahomet,' precisely as Christians believe 'that Judaism was superseded by Christianity.' The numerous forms of pagan worship which Mahometanism extinguished and supplanted, have never been restored except in the single instance of China, whose Tartar Mahometan conquerors embraced the faith of the conquered native Chinese. In every other country where it appeared, Mahometanism has taken firm and lasting root, though when opposed to Christianity, in political power it seems destined to yield altogether. But the ancient idolatry of Arabia which Mahomet overthrew has never revived, and in that country even now the Mahometans are still energetic and warlike enough to often threaten the British settlement of Aden on the Southern coast, the only spot in the Mahometan prophet's country under Christian rule. In Syria, however, the Druses, a small pagan tribe, still remain near Mount Lebanon, con-

stantly fighting with the Maronite Christians, who have chiefly become Roman Catholics ; but, both these races are under Turkish rule, which has lately been preserved only by the efforts and wishes of France and England.

The two ancient and banished races—Jews and Parsees—still remain apart from all other religious communities, making and seeking few converts, and alike without home or country. Yet both are civilised races, of education and intelligence, mixing freely with Christians and Mahometans, and living chiefly engaged in trade in the principal cities of Europe and Asia. But hitherto they have exercised little political influence, nor do they, apparently, desire it ; toleration, and a fair share of civil and legal rights, seem all that they wish for ; while their original countries, Persia and Syria, remain under Mahometan rule, the one at the mercy of France and England, and the other, more and more, at the mercy of advancing Russia.

But, though the political jealousies of European Christians have, especially of late years,

greatly impeded their foreign conquests, it is evident that it is now only Christians themselves who can retard the political progress of their religion, when neither Mahometan nor pagan foes are any longer able to do so. For the triumph of Christianity during this present century has never experienced any serious reverse from without. Its new danger has arisen within its own dominions, and its doctrines and history are now more opposed, questioned, and resisted by some of the most learned men in the chief cities of Europe than by Moslem or pagan foes. And these cannot be considered mere Atheists or scoffers, who, as Macaulay says of Voltaire, ‘venerate nothing,’ for many are sincere Deists who admire and obey Christian precepts, while denying both Christ’s divinity and the Gospel history;¹ while, others again (like the late Lord Amberley in his ‘Analysis of Religious Belief’), view Jesus almost in the

¹ As Paley remarks (‘Evidences of Christianity,’ p. 374), ‘It is possible that many may be kept in order by Christianity, who are not themselves Christians. They may be guided by the rectitude which it communicates to public opinion.’

same light as did the Jewish priests, Annas and Caiaphas. But the most influential of those who now distrust part of the Christian doctrines, do so in a very different spirit from Voltaire, Hume, or Gibbon, whose constant sarcasms made less permanent impression on the public mind than might have been expected, perhaps, considering their great abilities and the immense popularity of their works. For many modern Deists view Jesus with respect as a great and virtuous teacher, while denying His divinity and part of the Gospel history. Yet, though their arguments and opinions have been much discussed, and with perfect freedom, they have hitherto never been the avowed principles of any political government. The writings of Renan in France, of Strauss in Germany, and of many other Deistical and infidel writers of ability in Great Britain and America, seem hitherto to possess little or no influence with the rulers and governments of those countries. Indeed, the terrible failure of the French infidel Republic in the last century

seems to have since deterred all aspirants to political power from manifesting distrust, not only of religion, but of the Christian form of it. For in all the revolutions and political changes of Christian countries, France alone has ventured publicly to repudiate the faith; but, in doing so, she repudiated all other religions as well. The previous English revolutions headed by Cromwell and William III. were alike supported and opposed by men of sincere religious feelings among the contending parties. All previous, cotemporary, and subsequent political changes in the Christian world have carefully preserved the Christian religion in its most essential respects. Even at Rome, in 1848, during the flight of the Pope, and the rule of a revolutionary Triumvirate, though the political power of Christian clergy was overthrown, the Christian faith was still acknowledged. In all other European revolutions, Christianity was never either abolished or condemned. When Louis Napoleon seized supreme power in France, and suppressed the Republic

over which he presided (1851), he did so with the aid of the clergy, and inaugurated his successful assumption of absolute authority by a solemn service in the cathedral of Notre Dame.

It appears very remarkable, that in France where Christianity has been more attacked and disavowed than in any other civilised country, and which has had so many political changes, no regular government, since the brief Reign of Terror, has ventured to repudiate it. Napoleon I., the restored Bourbon family, the Republic successively presided over by Lamartine and General Cavaignac, the Empire of Napoleon III., and lastly, the present Republic, under Marshal MacMahon, have alike steadily acknowledged Christianity as the established religion, and in a form almost unchanged from that of the early French monarchs, Clovis and Charlemagne. The present governments of Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Italy, &c., are all Christian, either Protestant or Roman Catholic; and yet, in all these countries many anti-Christian writers have appeared and disappeared without perma-

nently affecting the established religion, though their talents have often aroused admiration and attention. The changes effected in Christendom by the Protestant Reformation, which prevailed in a portion of it, leaving the greater part as before, certainly never weakened Christianity in a political sense by advancing or promoting any other religion in its place. So completely do Christian doctrines prevail in modern civilised countries, that no attacks upon them by those whose lives violate their essential principles would have much effect on the public mind. It is only when anti-Christian thinkers and writers are men of estimable character, whose 'system of ethics,' as Macaulay says,¹ 'are borrowed from the Christian morality,' that they now command attention and respect. Even the Jews, while preserving their ancient faith, are now a changed race in other respects from their former state, owing to the influences of European civilisation, whose laws and usages are founded on the leading principles of Christi-

¹ 'Essay on Ranke's History.'

anity. It is true that many pious Deists, Jews, &c., affirm that these principles, though politically associated with Christianity, are not exclusively confined to it, but are also enjoined by other religions. Yet it is evident that, in modern times at least, no country, except under Christian political rule, has attained to real civilisation. A purely Deistical government has never existed since the conquest of Judea by the Romans, and at present neither Deists, Freethinkers, Jews, nor Parsees, have supreme authority in any country; for the whole world is politically ruled by either Christians, Mahometans, or heathens, of different denominations. Although Christianity has for centuries been divided between hostile sections, its political triumph throughout the world has thus, for many years, been steady and apparently resistless. And despite the wars between Christian nations in Europe, the bitterness of Christian controversies, and the attacks of Deism and infidelity within its pale, the political extension of Christianity over the other quarters of the

globe has been more or less successful in all of them. This continued triumph is, perhaps, as much owing to the political decline of all the non-Christian nations as to the increasing power of the Christians. For, although their power is decidedly increasing, it is certainly not caused by either moral or political combination among them. The Greek and Latin branches of the Christian faith are as hopelessly opposed as ever. The more recent strife between Roman Catholics and Protestants, though now confined to peaceful arguments and discussions, is still far from being ended in a spirit of either philosophical agreement or even Christian charity, while the Greek or Eastern Church, though politically oppressed by Mahometan rule in Turkey, has been comparatively free from dispute or difference within its more restricted communion. In recent history, however, and especially during this century, the increased facilities of communication, and the vast spread of education, have added immensely to the political strength of the Christian powers of

Europe and America, but these advantages have hardly extended to the Mahometan and pagan nations of Asia and Africa. And, notwithstanding the recent conflicts within Christendom, political power was never so exclusively in Christian hands as at present, and the existing state of the world proves the utter weakness of all Mahometan and heathen countries in comparison. For the immense armies and fleets still maintained by Christian powers reveal their fear and distrust of each other, but, except from themselves, all danger has long passed away. The few non-Christian governments remaining in the world are all on the defensive, and thankful to be left alone. Never, in history, was Christian supremacy so complete and undisputed; and yet it is remarkable that for a long period there have been no *national* conversions to Christianity throughout the changing political world. It is mainly Europeans that have spread Christianity, and are still extending it by carrying it with them into all the countries they invade and inhabit. The

native Indians of America are gradually disappearing with their ancient superstitions, and, in those countries where they intermarried with Europeans, their descendants have adopted European habits with the Christian faith, while the few Indian tribes that yet remain independent, reject Christianity and civilisation alike. In Asia and Africa, the subject Mahometans, pagans, and Parsees of India, Tartary, and Algiers, while obeying English, Russian, and French laws, retain their ancient customs as far as their Christian rulers permit, and steadily preserve their different religions; and the few independent Mahometan and pagan nations remaining in Asia and Africa show little desire either to convert or be converted. It is the vast increase and extension of European races over the world that has spread the Christian faith, which, *as a rule*, has been rejected by the native races of Asia, Africa, and America; but all these races, for many years, have become fewer in number or weaker in political power; nor does there seem the least

sign of reviving energy and strength in any of them ; for the progress of Christianity goes steadily on without incurring any serious check, though often delayed by the frequent wars among European nations themselves for political purposes alone. For the different Christian powers conquer and annex other Christian countries without even converting their inhabitants to separate forms of Christianity, while Jews, Mahometans, Parsees, and heathens, under Christian rule, steadily adhere to their different religions. The English, French, and Russians, alike, politically govern Mahometans, yet neither in India, Algiers, nor Tartary, do the subject races become Christians, except in rare instances, even when they might do so with safety. Nevertheless, the extension of Christian rule increases rapidly. No obstacles greater than those already surmounted, nor, perhaps, as great, seem likely to arise, and judging from past and present history, there appears sufficient reason to believe that the political dominion of Christianity will, in time, comprehend the world.

And yet, while its external triumph is so vast and irresistible, it is evident that in the most civilised countries of Europe, Christianity is now more doubted and questioned than ever by those who were born and educated in that faith. These new opponents are neither ignorant enthusiasts nor eager advocates of other religions. Many of them have had all the advantages of modern education and enlightenment, and have chiefly arisen in Europe amid the oldest Christian communities, while throughout vast Christian colonies and settlements in other quarters of the globe, the Christian faith has been comparatively undisputed. Thus modern history shows that Christianity, when opposed to other religious systems, flourishes and triumphs, but when successful and undisturbed, it often becomes distrusted by some of the most educated and enlightened members of its own communion, who, without substituting other religions in its place, have hitherto contented themselves with denying more or less of its doctrines and history. It is, however, remarkable that these

new enemies to, or rather deserters from the faith, were never either very numerous or influential when Christianity was endangered by other religious systems. Yet now, when its political success throughout the world appears so rapid and irresistible, this singular opposition arises peacefully in the heart of Christendom itself, as if to warn sincere Christians against that spirit of indolent security which a long course of continued triumph usually inspires.

THE END.

